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Volume - I

Chhawchharia

ADHYĀTMA RĀMĀYAN

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ADHYĀTMA RĀMĀYAṆA

Sanskrit Text with Transliteration, English Commentary alongwith Explanatory Notes, Relevant Appendices etc.

Commentary by

Sri Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

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ADHYĀTMA RĀMĀYAṆA

of

Maharṣi Vedavyāsa

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THE
CHAUKHAMBA SURBHARATI STUDIES
8

ADHYĀTMA RĀMĀYAṆA

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Maharṣi Vedavyāsa

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VOLUME - I

Compiled and Translated by

Sri Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

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CHAUKHAMBA SURBHARATI PRAKASHAN
VARANASI

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To My Most Beloved Lord Ram

A Humble Word from Author

No creature is perfect; it's foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or butterfly – he went on endlessly evolving and designing new forms.

Honestly, I am totally incompetent – it is the Lord who has done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were mere instruments in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be his very own is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope the readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

This effort is submitted at the Lord's holy feet, and finding no word to express my gratitude to him, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

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PREFACE

पार्वत्यै परमेश्वरेण गदिते ह्यध्यात्मरामायणे
काण्डैः सप्तभिरन्वितेऽतिशुभदे सर्गाश्चतुःषष्टिकाः।
श्लोकानां तु शतद्वयेन सहितान्युक्तानि चत्वारि वै
साहस्राणि समाप्तिः श्रुतिशतान्युक्तानि तत्त्वार्थतः।।

pārvatyai parameśvareṇa gadite hyadhyātmarāmāyaṇe
kāṇḍaiḥ saptabhiranvite'tiśubhade sargāścatuḥṣaṣṭikāḥ /
ślokānāṃ tu śatadvayena sahitānyuktāni catvāri vai
sāhasrāṇi samāptiḥ śrutiśatānyuktāni tattvārthataḥ //

This Adhyatma Ramayan—which was narrated by the supreme Lord (Shiva) himself to Parvati—has 7 chapters (or Kands) and 64 cantos in all. It is a bestower of great auspiciousness and welfares. From beginning to end it has 4200 Slokas (verses) while hundreds of sublime precepts of the scriptures have been encapsulated in the discussions of different spiritual and philosophical aspects of metaphysics which are enshrined in this holy and divine book called Adhyatma Ramayan.

It is said that Adhyatma Ramayan was first narrated by lord Ram to Shiva (Baal Kand, canto 2, verse 4), then by Lord Shiva to Parvati (Baal Kand, canto 1, verse nos. 7, 16-17), subsequently by Lord Brahma to sage Narad (prologue/Mahatamya, verse nos. 16-17; 60), and the transcript of this latter conversation detailing verbatim the former (prologue, verse no. 28) was done by sage Veda Vyas—the legendary prodigious classifier of the Vedas along with their Upanishads, and the prolific author of the Purans, Mahabharat etc.—in the 'Uttar Khand of his Brahmand Puran'.

Being a magnificent product of such a prodigy of stupendous genius and matchless intellect who was also an enlightened soul, it is to be expected that Adhyatma Ramayan contains the essence of the highest of pristine philosophy, spiritualism and metaphysical concepts, well narrated in simple, lucid, vibrant and accessible

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language, and woven intricately in the main texture of the fabric consisting of the legendary divine story of Sri Ram.

Adhyatma Ramayan is a unique blend of the worldly story of Sri Ram as the most truthful, upright, valiant, valorous, righteous, noble and wise son of king Dashrath of Ayodhya vis-ë-vis his spiritual, divine, enlightened, sublime and holy form as the supreme Brahm himself. As the latter personified, Lord Ram is praised, honoured, lauded, adored and worshipped by the Gods, sages, seers, saints and other exalted ones as having all the characteristic attributes (or the lack of attributes, because the Lord has been described by the scriptures as being both Sagun as well as Nirgun) of the supreme, transcendental enigmatic Brahm.

The divine, magnificent and glorious virtues of the supreme, transcendental and truthful ultimate Authority in creation, known as Brahm who is the cause, sustainance and the end of this creation, is the subject matter of research, preaching and praise by the scriptures. Lord Ram is the physical embodiment of that 'authority'; he symbolises and personifies that supreme One in all its connotations and interpretations. Whereas the Upanishads (called Vedanta) were expounded by wise, erudite, enlightened and realised sages and seers who were deeply steeped and well versed in the truth of Brahm, the very fact that the same Brahm speaks himself in the form of Ram lends this magnum opus called Adhyatma Ramayan special glory and importance. It is like the Lord himself putting his seal of approval on the philosophy expounded by the Upanishads. In a way this magnificent and holy book is the Lord's epistle, his testament, his blessings for his devotees and the subjects of his creation.

The divine epic seamlessly blends the divine with the mundane, the metaphysics with the humdrum terrestrial existence, the concept of adoration, devotion and worship with high intellectual ponderings, contemplations and spiritual debates, and it thereby endeavours to unify the soul of the individual creature with its ultimate truthful form, which is incidentally the foundation of Nature as well—the supreme Soul of creation known as 'Brahm'.

Adhyatma Ramayan is a unique citadel of Vedanta philosophy that distills, condenses and crystallises highly complicated and abstract philosophy contained in the Vedas and Upanishads, and converts them

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into spiritually magnificent concepts, unique principles and axiomatic doctrines which are precise and succinct.

It will be observed that Veda Vyas has used the time tested tool of story-telling to put forward elementary truths concerning metaphysics in a succinct, lucid manner. This technique helps to effectively drive home the truths enshrined in the scriptures and makes them available even to an ordinary man who would normally have shunned dry and coarse philosophical discourse. An enchanting story is more attractive to keep him interested and involved. He pays close attention to it lest he misses out in some detail. This has its subtle benefit in as much as that he becomes aware of the tenets of the Vedas and the Upanishads, which has the potential to arouse curiosity in him to ponder further and research on the subject. Even in the eventuality that he does not find time or does not have the wherewithal for such study, this Adhyatma Ramayan serves the purpose for him, because it encapsulates in its pages all that the Upanishads have to essentially have to say. It inspires him towards spiritualism, it awakens self realisation in him, it tells him what is the 'real truth' as opposed to the 'apparent truth', it kindles the hitherto dormant divinity and holiness that is inherent to and an integral part of the 'truthful' nature of the creature as his soul, it enlightens him to who he actually is and why he has been deluded into erroneously thinking what is fundamentally false as being true!

As a result, all the cantos have one or the other aspect of spiritualism and metaphysics highlighted in the form of, what I like to call, 'gospels'. These gospels are what makes Adhyatma Ramayan so spiritually uplifting, unique, sublime, magnificent and matchless; they make it stand shoulders and heads above other tomes and treatises on philosophy, spiritualism and metaphysics as well as stories related to the legend of Sri Ram. They are so profound in their impact that if they are extracted from the main book and presented separately, they will form a light-house of wisdom, truthful knowledge and enlightenment. Coming out from the pen of the legendary scribe Veda Vyas, these gospels reflect and expound that exalted soul's deep insight into the truth of what constitutes the reality and what is only an illusionary mirage. It is an unmatched masterpiece of spiritual and metaphysical text ever written in Sanskrit.

What originally were highly abstract tenets and theories enshrined

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in the Vedas and Upanishads, and were generally beyond the reach of ordinary creatures, and were restricted to the domain of scholarly and learned souls such as exalted hermits, sages, seers, ascetics and mystics, and which could not be even read in a single life-span of an individual who were yearning for knowledge and self realisation—all have been distilled, condensed and put on platter, as it were, by Veda Vyas in the form of Adhyatma Ramayan for the common man.

It is also said that Goswami Tulsidas, the author of the epic Ram Charit Manas, drew his inspiration on spiritual and metaphysical matters from Adhyatma Ramayan more than any other text. If an analysis is made of Tulsidas' work, it would be established that he had adopted the same pattern of Veda Vyas to inextricably mingle sublime spiritual and metaphysical philosophy with the same story telling pattern of the divine story of Lord Ram.

Adhyatma Ramayan has two parallel strands running through the text—one dealing with the plain and simple narration of the events/episodes associated with the worldly life story of Sri Ram, and the other, more importantly for the seekers of truth and self realisation, the various axioms and maxims about spiritualism, the goal of life, the supreme and truthful knowledge, self realisation, enlightenment, pristine philosophical and metaphysical concepts etc.—all have been made easy for them through the medium of the story.

The reading of this unique holy book telling the divine story of Lord Ram lifts the reader from this mundane, humdrum existence into the higher realm of spiritualism marked by detachment, renunciation, self restraint, peace and tranquility of the mind and soul, the realisation that this world is an illusion and the fact that the supreme, unadulterated reality and truth is quite different from what we generally know or understand it to be. It kindles wisdom, self realisation and enlightenment in the heart of the true seeker. It removes darkness of ignorance and stupidity, and lights the beacon of true knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment. It is not a simple, often re-told story of Sri Ram, but a torch-light or an eye opener, as it were, in to the wisdom of the higher world of spiritualism, devotion, self realisation and enlightenment. In this aspect, sage Veda Vyas did earlier what Tulsidas did later on.

Adhyatma Ramayan is broadly classified into 8 chapters. The first is a prologue, called Mahatamya, i.e. importance of the book. It is an

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introductory chapter telling us why, for whom and by whom this story was narrated; what are its benefits and significance. The remaining 7 chapters follow the usual pattern of Sri Ram's story having the different Kands pertaining to a particular period in his life. A quick perusal of the contents page of the book will clarify the matter.

Further, each Kand (chapter) has a number of sub-chapters or cantos. And each canto has a series of verses. All have been numbered for easy reading and reference. The divine story of Sri Ram helps 'to open their eyes, and to turn them away from darkness to light, and from power of Satan (read Maya) unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins (and achieve emancipation and salvation) and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me' (the holy Bible, Acts 26/18) because 'to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace' (the holy Bible, Romans 8/6). It is indeed true that 'God so loved the world that he (manifested himself to) be its saviour' (the holy Bible, gospel of St. John 3/16) in the form of Sri Ram to illuminate this dark world with the light of true knowledge and wisdom, and to light a beacon for the world so as to serve as a guide for humankind as a whole, because example is always better than mere hypothetical precepts. But there must be someone to explain and codify this knowledge so that it can be digested and assimilated by mankind.

Veda Vyas is considered as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu precisely for the above purpose, for who else can have that prodigious and stupendous intellect, memory, knowledge and deep insight that he had, besides pouring out such voluminous treatises of immaculate beauty and incorporating in their sweep the entire gamut of all that is known as Gyan, in one lifetime. Therefore, he 'taught them as one that had the authority and not just as a scribe' (the holy Bible, gospel of St. Marks 1/22). The language he used was the language in vogue at the time, but in our modern, present day world, Sanskrit has become the realm of scholastic individuals only, and Hindi or any other regional vernacular language has its own geographical limitations. English, on the other hand, is the global language of the modern world, and so it was felt by me that an English rendering would extend the reach of this beautiful book to all the corners of the globe where mankind exists. The Bible says 'wherefore let him speaketh in an unknown tongue, pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an

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unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth but my understanding is unfruitful (Corinthians 1/14/13-15)' and 'I had rather speak few words with my understanding.... than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue (Corinthians 1/14/19)'.

I have tried to present a verse by verse, line by line simple English rendering of the holy text which is in Sanskrit. This oftentimes created a piquant situation—for the original text has a lot of repetition of words, ideas, adjectives etc.; many a times it was not possible to isolate two verses or three verses for the purpose of English rendering, so I had to club more verses together. Again, the Sanskrit words used to describe metaphysical principles and concepts, such as for example about the various characteristics of the Atma/soul and the Parmatma/Brahm cannot be rendered in an alien language such as English by the use of a single word. Unless a group or cluster of words is used, the concept will not be clear. This explains why I had to use more than one specific word for a single word or phrase used in the original text.

In order to ensure that the spirit of the original Sanskrit text is not lost while rendering it into another language in an attempt to lay great stress on the literal translation, it was deemed fit, proper and prudent to give more stress on bringing out the subtle meaning, the spirit of the sentences by fine-tuning the translation so that often times it might appear to be transcreation, which it is not because nothing is transposed or is extrenous to the text. There is no interpolation, no imposition, no twirling or fiddling with the text. If the meaning is not clear, the translation or rendering becomes useless. So, I have tried my best to guard against this pit-fall.

Again, to be faithful to the tenor of the text, I have sometimes overlooked niceties of grammar because if I had observed the decorum and rigidity of immaculate grammar, the verses would have to be turned on their head, as it were. But this has been kept to the bare minimum. So, I pray my readers will keep this in mind while going through the text. Wherever an idea struck me, or elaborations, explanations, details were needed to elucidate the text, I have appended a brief footnote to the verse.

The pristine and profound Vedanta concepts as explained in the text are sometimes so confusing, cluttered with high sounding and uncommon terminology, using words and phrases that they needed

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to be simplified and explained separately. So, I have therefore appended a separate appendix no.2 to this book to explain them in simple and layman's language to clear up the confusion about the principal concepts, as far as I could.

Whenever possible, I have also mentioned cross references in the text at the end of a set of verses themselves so that the reader can quickly refer to the relevant idea, or elaboration of that idea, or a different idea having relevance to the present one, in the other part of the book if he so wishes.

Besides the appendix no.2 as mentioned above, I have added few other appendices to make the book useful—viz Appendix no. 1 tells us the life of sage Veda Vyas and outlines his works, Appendix no. 3 has a list of the various gospels included in the text and which form an integral part of it but nevertheless can be separated from it and read independently as magnificent and matchless examples of pristine spiritual tenets and philosophy said in succinct and precise manner, Appendix no. 4 lists the explanatory diagrams, charts and major notes, Appendix no. 5 introduces the various chief characters in Adhyatma Ramayan, while Appendix no. 6 lists the other books that I have humbly attempted in honour and service of my beloved Lord Sri Ram. Appendix no. 7 has my humble dedication-letter to Sri Ram.

Finally, I submit most humbly before my dear and most esteemed readers to excuse and overlook my omissions and commissions, and imbibe the nectar as the bees do from the flower. Never mind the colour of the flower, its looks or its habitat, but enjoy the nectar nevertheless! I hope that Adhyatma Ramayan will 'confirm the souls of the (Lord's) disciples and that we must through much tribulation (i.e. the effort of reading and understanding of this tome and implementing it in our daily lives) enter into the kingdom of God' (the holy Bible, Acts 14/22).

I submit this holy book before my beloved and dearest of dear Sri Ram who had inspired and impelled me to go about writing it; who had so mercifully helped the pen to move on paper when, more often than not I had virtually thrown up my arms in defeat and surrender. It's a wonder of all wonders that a stupid man like me could ever have achieved this Herculean task. All the credit for the book goes to the Lord—and this is heartfelt and not a mere lip-service, as it was—and any errors that may have crept in inadvertently are definitely mine,

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because after all I am an ordinary mortal human being like the rest of us. I hope and earnestly pray that 'the word of God will multiply throughout all the regions (of the world)' (the holy Bible, Acts 12/24, 13/49).

I express my sincerest of thanks to all who have helped in realising this dream, right from those who have helped me with composing, Sanskrit proof reading and getting this book published and reaching your hands.

I am especially very thankful to and express my deep gratitude to Shri Navneet Das Gupta ji of Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi, who has done a commendable job by getting this book published. My sincere prayers to Lord Ram are for his all-round welfare and success. The Lord is very magnanimous and the fact that he has chosen Sri Navneet Das Gupta ji to do His job is indeed a matter of great pride and privilege for him. There is no doubt in the fact that he is very lucky and blessed.

If Adhyatma Ramayan kindles love and affection for the Lord, self realisation, wisdom and enlightenment in even one soul, my efforts would be deemed to be fruitful, because one candle lit can light more candles. I have no doubt that this beacon would shine day and night atop the lighthouse of truthful knowledge and devotion to guide the ships of our mundane, humdrum lives, caught in the rough and tumble of the ferocious, merciless, buffeting ocean-like entrapping, artificial and deluding world, in its journey towards self realisation, emancipation and ultimate salvation—a journey inwards rather than outwards; a journey that could wreck the whole ship had it not been for the beacon of this lighthouse called Adhyatma Ramayan containing the divine story Lord Ram, the Supreme Brahm! Amen!

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

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KEY TO TRANSLITERATION

स्वराः / Svarāḥ / Vowels							
a अ	ā आ	i इ	ī ई	u उ	ū ऊ	ṛ ऋ	ṝ ॠ
	e ए	ai ऐ	o ओ	au औ	aṃ अं	aḥ अः	
Anusvāra ṁ, ṁ ṃ				Visarga : ḥ			

व्यञ्जनाः / Vyañjanāḥ / Consonants									
k क्	ka क	kh ख्	kha ख	g ग्	ga ग	gh घ्	gha घ	ṅ ङ्	ṅa ङ
c च्	ca च	ch छ्	cha छ	j ज्	ja ज	jh झ्	jha झ	ñ ञ्	ña ञ
ṭ ट्	ṭa ट	ṭh ठ्	ṭha ठ	ḍ ड्	ḍa ड	ḍh ढ्	ḍha ढ	ṇ ण्	ṇa ण
t त्	ta त	th थ्	tha थ	d द्	da द	dh ध्	dha ध	n न्	na न
p प्	pa प	ph फ्	pha फ	b ब्	ba ब	bh भ्	bha भ	m म्	ma म
y य्	ya य	r र्	ra र	l ल्	la ल	v व्	va व		
ś श्	śa श	ṣ ष्	ṣa ष	s स्	sa स	h ह्	ha ह		
kṣ क्ष्	kṣa क्ष	tr त्र्	tra त्र	jñ ज्ञ्	jña ज्ञ				

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Veda Vyāsa'

ADHYĀTMA RĀMĀYAṆA

(Extracted from Brahmaand Puran, Uttar Khand)

वेद व्यास विरचित

अध्यात्म रामायण

(ब्रह्माण्ड पुराण, उत्तर खण्ड)

Importance (Prologue)

अप्रमेयत्रयातीतनिर्मलज्ञानमूर्तये। मनोगिरां विदूराय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः।।1।।

aprameyatrayātītanirmalajñānamūrtaye /
manogirāṃ vidūrāya dakṣiṇāmūrtaye namaḥ //

I pay my homage/obeisance to the South-facing Lord Shiva who is beyond proof and evidence (i.e. does not need them to establish his existence), is beyond the three Gunas (Satvic, Rajsic, Tamsic), is faultless, is an embodiment of wisdom and knowledge, and is not the subject matter of comprehension by the mind and description by the speech (1).

सूत उवाच

कदाचिन्नारदो योगी परानुग्रहवाञ्छया। पर्यटन्सकलाँल्लोकान् सत्यलोकमुपागमत्।।2।।
तत्र दृष्ट्वा मूर्तिमद्भिश्छन्दोभिः परिवेष्टितम्। बालार्कप्रभया सम्यग्भासयन्तं सभागृहम्।।3।।
मार्कण्डेयादिमुनिभिः स्तूयमानं मुहुर्मुहुः। सर्वार्थगोचरज्ञानं सरस्वत्या समन्वितम्।।4।।
चतुर्मुखं जगन्नाथं भक्ताभीष्टफलप्रदम्। प्रणम्य दण्डवद्भक्त्या तुष्टाव मुनिपुङ्गवः।।5।।

sūta uvāca

kadācinnārado yogī parānugrahavāñchayā /
paryaṭansakalāṁllokān satyalokamupāgamat //
tatra dṛṣṭvā mūrtimadbhiśchandobhiḥ pariveṣṭitam /
bālārkaprabhayā samyagbhāsayantaṃ sabhāgṛham //
mārkaṇḍeyādimunibhiḥ stūyamānaṃ muhurmuhuḥ /
sarvārthagocarajñānaṃ sarasvatyā samanvitam //
caturmukhaṃ jagannāthaṃ bhaktābhīṣṭaphalapradam /
praṇamya daṇḍavadbhaktyā tuṣṭāva munipuṅgavaḥ //

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Sage Sut Said, 'Once, ascetic (celestial saint) Narad roamed in all the worlds and reached Satyalok (heavens) with the intention of seeking welfare for all the creatures (2). There he saw Lord Brahma who was surrounded by the four Vedas in a visible form (i.e. personified image), whose early morning sun-like glorious splendour fully lightened up the heavenly assembly, who was being worshipped repeatedly by sages Markandey and others (who were singing hymns in his praise), who has the knowledge of all that is worth knowing, who bestows all the desired fruits to his devotees, who was at that time accompanied by Saraswati (goddess of wisdom, knowledge, speech and erudition), and who is the Lord of the creation. Seeing him thus, the best amongst sages and the most exalted Narad, prostrated himself (in reverence and to pay obeisance) in front of him, and then worshipped him by singing hymns in his praise (3-5).

सन्तुष्टस्तं मुनिं प्राह स्वयम्भूर्वैष्णवोत्तमम्। किं प्रष्टुकामस्त्वमसि तद्वदिष्यामि ते मुने।। 6।।
इत्याकर्ण्य वचस्तस्य मुनिर्ब्रह्माणमब्रवीत्। त्वत्तः श्रुतं मया सर्वं पूर्वमेव शुभाशुभम्।। 7।।
इदानीमेकमेवास्ति श्रोतव्यं सुरसत्तम। तद्रहस्यमपि ब्रूहि यदि तेऽनुग्रहो मयि।। 8।।

santuṣṭastaṃ muniṃ prāha svayambhūrvaiṣṇavottamam /
kiṃ praṣṭukāmastvamasi tadvadiṣyāmi te mune //
ityākarṇya vacastasya munirbrahmāṇamabravīt /
tvattaḥ śrutaṃ mayā sarvaṃ pūrvameva śubhāśubham //
idānīmekamevāsti śrotavyaṃ surasattama /
tadrahasyamapi brūhi yadi te'nugraho mayi //

Pleased, the self-begotten Brahma said to the most exalted Vaishnav saint Narad, 'Oh Sage! What do you want to know? I shall tell you all that you wish to know' (6).

Sage Narad replied, 'Oh the most exalted Brahma! I have already heard from you all about what constitutes good and virtuous deeds and actions; what is righteous, noble and virtuous. Now there is only one more thing which I wish to hear from you. If you are pleased with me then you should divulge it to me inspite of it being a matter of top secrecy (i.e. not worth telling to all and sundry) (7-8).

प्राप्ते कलियुगे घोरे नराः पुण्यविवर्जिताः। दुराचाररताः सर्वे सत्यवार्तापराङ्मुखाः।। 9।।
परापवादनिरताः परद्रव्याभिलाषिणः। परस्त्रीसक्तमनसः परहिंसापरायणाः।। 10।।

prāpte kaliyuge ghore narāḥ puṇyavivarjitāḥ /
durācāraratāḥ sarve satyavārtāparāṅmukhāḥ //

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parāpavādaniratāḥ paradravyābhilāṣiṇaḥ /
parastrīsaktamanasaḥ parahiṃsāparāyaṇāḥ //

With the arrival of the terrible Kaliyug (the era marked by sins, evils and vices), the people would forsake righteous and virtuous paths and truth, and instead would indulge in unrighteousness and vices of all sorts (9). They would indulge and find pleasure in malicious gossip, covet the wealth and women of others, and harm them unnecessarily (10).

देहात्मदृष्टयो मूढा नास्तिकाः पशुबुद्धयः। मातापितृकृतद्वेषाः स्त्रीदेवाः कामकिङ्कराः॥ 11॥
विप्रा लोभग्रहग्रस्ता वेदविक्रयजीविनः। धनार्जनार्थमभ्यस्तविद्या मदविमोहिताः॥ 12॥

dehātmadṛṣṭayo mūḍhā nāstikāḥ paśubuddhyaḥ /
mātāpitṛkṛtadveṣāḥ strīdevāḥ kāmakiṅkarāḥ //
viprā lobhagrahagrastā vedavikrayajīvinaḥ /
dhanārjanārthamabhyastavidyā madavimohitāḥ //

'Those idiots (people of Kaliyug) would think that their bodies are their 'true self', they would be non-believers (heretics), their intellect (thinking, discrimination, behaviour, outlook) would be no better than those of animals, and being slave to 'Kaam' (lust, passion, greed) they would be infatuated towards women and opposed to their own parents (11). The Brahmins, being eclipsed (overcome, subjugated, dominated) by greed/avarice, would sell the Vedas and earn a livelihood from them; they would acquire knowledge only to earn money, and shall become haughty and arrogant (due to their knowledge and superior birth) (12).

त्यक्तस्वजातिकर्माणः प्रायशः परवञ्चकाः। क्षत्रियाश्च तथा वैश्याः स्वधर्मत्यागशीलिनः॥ 13॥
तद्वच्छूद्राश्च ये केचिद्ब्राह्मणाचारतत्पराः। स्त्रियश्च प्रायशो भ्रष्टा भर्त्रवज्ञाननिर्भयाः॥ 14॥

tyaktasvajātikarmāṇaḥ prāyaśaḥ paravañcakāḥ /
kṣatriyāśca tathā vaiśyāḥ svadharmatyāgaśīlinaḥ //
tadvacchūdrāśca ye kecidbrāhmaṇācāratatparāḥ /
striyaśca prāyaśo bhraṣṭā bhartravajñānanirbhayāḥ //

The Kshatriyas and Vaishyas (i.e. the warrior and trading classes respectively) would also abandon their designated role in society, their duties and responsibilities, and instead would become deceitful, cheats and full of conceit (13). Similarly, the Shudras (low caste) would indulge in Brahmin-like behaviours, while the women would be

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generally unchaste, disloyal and would not shy from insulting their husbands (14).

[Note—The scriptures have divided the society into four classes to facilitate organized working of it. These were merely a delegation of duties so that each class can devote its energy and time efficiently. The society has been divided into four sections or classes by ancient sages to regulate its functioning by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. These four sections are—(a) Brahmins—the learned and teaching class; they also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period. A Brahmin should posses these noble qualities—(1) 'Riju'-be expert in the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, (2) 'Tapa'-should be involved in doing penances, observing austerities and enduring sufferings for the welfare of the soul and the society, (3) 'Santosh'-be contented and satisfied, (4) 'Kshamaa'-to be forgiving and tolerant, (5) 'Sheel'—to have such virtues as good character, dignity, decorum and virtuousness, (6) 'Jitendriya'-to have self control over the sense organs, (7) 'Data'-to be a giver, one who sacrifices his own interests for the benefit of others, (8) 'Gyani'-one who is well learned, wise, enlightened and erudite, (9) 'Dayaalu'—to be merciful and compassionate. [Shatpath Brahmin.] An entire Upanishad called Vajra-shuchiko-panishad, belonging to the Sam Veda tradition is devoted to the subject and is included as chapter no.6 in this humble author's anthology of Upanishads. (b) Kshatriyas—they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas—they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life, and (d) the Shudras—the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.]

श्वाशुरद्रोहकारिण्यो भविष्यन्ति न संशयः। एतेषां नष्टबुद्धीनां परलोकः कथं भवेत्।। 15।।
इति चिन्ताकुलं चित्तं जायते मम सन्ततम्। लघूपायेन येनैषां परलोकगतिर्भवेत्।
तमुपायमुपाख्याहि सर्वं वेत्ति यतो भवान्।। 16।।

śvaāśuradrohakāriṇyo bhaviṣyanti na samśayaḥ /
eteṣāṃ naṣṭabuddhīnāṃ paralokaḥ kathaṃ bhavet //

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iti cintākulaṃ cittaṃ jāyate mama santatam /
laghūpāyena yenaiṣāṃ parclokagatirbhavet /
tamupāyamupākhyāhi sarvaṃ vetti yato bhavān //

There is no doubt that they would be malicious towards the fathers-and-mothers-in-law. How is it possible to have their emancipation and salvation? (15). This is a cause of constant worry for me. Tell me a simple method (way) which can redeem them, because you are all-knowing' (16).

इत्यृषेर्वाक्यमाकर्ण्य प्रत्युवाचाम्बुजासनः। साधु पृष्टं त्वया साधो वक्ष्ये तच्छृणु सादरम्।। 17।।
पुरा त्रिपुरहन्तारं पार्वती भक्तवत्सला। श्रीरामतत्त्वं जिज्ञासुः पप्रच्छ विनयान्विता।। 18।।

ityṛṣervākyamākarṇya pratyuvācāmbujāsanaḥ /
sādhu pṛṣṭaṃ tvayā sādho vakṣye tacchṛṇu sādaram //
purā tripurahantāraṃ pārvatī bhaktavatsalā /
śrīrāmatattvaṃ jijñāsuḥ papraccha vinayānvitā //

Hearing these words of the celestial sage Narad, Brahma who was sitting on a lotus, replied, 'Oh Saint! You have asked a good and noble thing. I shall tell you; listen attentively and with faith (17). In ancient (earlier) times, Parvati (the consort of Lord Shiva), who loves her devotees and who was inspired by the quest to know the essential, supreme and absolute truth (element) about 'Ram', had asked about it from Lord Shiva, who is the destroyer of Tripura (a demon), and most powerful (18).

प्रियायै गिरिशस्तस्यै गूढं व्याख्यातवान् स्वयम्। पुराणोत्तमध्यात्मरामायणमिति स्मृतम्।। 19।।
तत्पार्वती जगद्धात्री पूजयित्वा दिवानिशम्। आलोचयन्ती स्वानन्दमग्ना तिष्ठति साम्प्रतम्।। 20।।

priyāyai giriśastasyai gūḍhaṃ vyākhyātavān svayam /
purāṇottamadhyātmarāmāyaṇamiti smṛtam //
tatpārvatī jagaddhātrī pūjayitvā divāniśam /
ālocayantī svānandamagnā tiṣṭhati sāmpratam //

The secret that Mahadeo (Shiva) divulged and enunciated (expounded, described, narrated in detail) at that time to his beloved (Parvati) came to be renowned as '**Adhyatma Ramayan**' (19). Now, the mother of all creation, Parvati, worships it, thinks and contemplates upon it day and night, and remains submerged in a state of constant bliss, peace and tranquility derived as a consequence of it (20).

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प्रचरिष्यति तल्लोके प्राण्यदृष्टवशाद्यदा। तस्याध्ययनमात्रेण जना यास्यन्ति सद्गतिम्।। 21।।
तावद्विजृम्भते पापं ब्रह्महत्यापुरःसरम्। यावज्जगति नाध्यात्मरामायणमुदेष्यति।। 22।।

pracariṣyati talloke prāṇyadṛṣṭavaśādyadā /
tasyādhyayanamātreṇa janā yāsyanti sadgatim //
tāvadvijṛmbhate pāpaṃ brahmahatyāpuraḥsaram /
yāvajjagati nādhyātmarāmāyaṇamudeṣyati //

At the opportune time when this Ramayan would be propagated in the world due to the advent of good luck and fortunate circumstances of the people, they would get an auspicious end (i.e. emancipation and salvation of their soul and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death) by merely studying it and remembering it devotionally and reverentially (21). Great sins and their horrendous consequences, such as the unpardonable sin of killing of Brahmins (or anyone who is senior and learned for that matter) etc., would exist only till the time that Adhyatma Ramayan does not make its debut in the world (i.e. the society cannot benefit from this holy and divine book which would act as a beacon of hope, a moral guide and wise teacher) (22).

तावत्कलिमहोत्साहो निःशङ्कं सम्प्रवर्तते। यावज्जगति नाध्यात्मरामायणमुदेष्यति।। 23।।
तावद्यमभटाः शूराः सञ्चरिष्यन्ति निर्भयाः। यावज्जगति नाध्यात्मरामायणमुदेष्यति।। 24।।

tāvatkalimahotsāho niḥśaṅkaṃ sampravartate /
yāvajjagati nādhyātmarāmāyaṇamudeṣyati //
tāvadyamabhaṭāḥ śūrāḥ sañcariṣyanti nirbhayāḥ /
yāvajjagati nādhyātmarāmāyaṇamudeṣyati //

Kaliyug will have its free run only till the time Adhyatma Ramayan does not rise (like a sun to remove the darkness of ignorance, and emerge like a ray of light from behind the veil of clouds to illuminate) and make its glorious presence felt in this world (23). The brave and ferocious messengers of 'Yam' (God of death and hell) would roam freely unhindered and unopposed in this world only till the time this Adhyatma Ramayan does not manifest itself (24).

तावत्सर्वाणि शास्त्राणि विवदन्ते परस्परम्।। 25।।
तावत्स्वरूपं रामस्य दुर्बोधं महतामपि। यावज्जगति नाध्यात्मरामायणमुदेष्यति।। 26।।

tāvatsarvāṇi śāstrāṇi vivadante parasparam //

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tāvatsvarūpaṃ rāmasya durbodhaṃ mahatāmapi /
yāvajjagati nādhyātmarāmāyaṇamudeṣyati //

And all the discords, disputes and debates arising out of confusions and doubts created by schisms and misunderstandings about the scriptures and their different interpretations, as well as the ignorance about the true essence and truthful nature of 'Ram' in the heart, mind and intellect of even wise and great souls would exist only till the time the divine light of Adhyatma Ramayan does not shine in this world (25-26).

अध्यात्मरामायणसङ्कीर्तनश्रवणादिजम्। फलं वक्तुं न शक्नोमि कात्स्न्र्येन मुनिसत्तम।। 27।।
तथापि तस्य माहात्म्यं वक्ष्ये किञ्चित्तवानघ। शृणु चित्तं समाधाय शिवेनोक्तं पुरा मम।। 28।।

adhyātmarāmāyaṇasaṅkīrtanaśravaṇādijam /
phalaṃ vaktuṃ na śaknomi kārtsnyena munisattam //
tathāpi tasya māhātmyaṃ vakṣye kiñcittavānagha /
śṛṇu cittaṃ samādhya śivenoktaṃ purā mama //

'Oh the most exalted sage (Narad)! I cannot fully describe the benefits and rewards (fruits) of attentively listening to and devotionally singing of the hymns of Adhyatma Ramayan—but oh 'Anagh' (the sinless, pure and faultless one), still I shall tell you a little (a fraction, a part) of its divine glories and great importance. Earlier, Shiva had narrated it to me. So, listen attentively (27-28).

अध्यात्मरामायणतः श्लोकं श्लोकार्धमेव वा। यः पठेद्भक्तिसंयुक्तः स पापान्मुच्यते क्षणात्।। 29।।
यस्तु प्रत्यहमध्यात्मरामायणमनन्यधीः। यथाशक्ति वदेद्भक्त्या स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते।। 30।।

adhyātmarāmāyaṇataḥ ślokaṃ ślokārdhameva vā /
yaḥ paṭhedbhaktisaṁyuktaḥ sa pāpānmucyate kṣaṇāt //
yastu pratyahamadhyātmarāmāyaṇamananyadhīḥ /
yathāśakti vadedbhaktyā sa jīvanmukta ucyate //

Those who read one or even a half of any hymn contained in Adhyatma Ramayan with faith, belief, sincerity and devotion are instantly freed from their sins (and their effects) (29). Those who listen to Adhyatma Ramayan daily with a pure (uncorrupt) mind, with due concentration, devotion and in accordance to their ability and circumstances, are deemed to be liberated from the shackles of this existence (i.e. mundane, ensnaring and deluding life in this mortal world) (30).

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यो भक्त्यार्चयतेऽध्यात्मरामायणमतन्द्रितः। दिने दिनेऽश्वमेधस्य फलं तस्य भवेन्मुने।। 31।।
यदृच्छयापि योऽध्यात्मरामायणमनादरात्। अन्यतः शृणुयान्मर्त्यः सोऽपि मुच्येत पातकात्।। 32।।
नमस्करोति योऽध्यात्मरामायणमदूरतः। सर्वदेवार्चनफलं स प्राप्नोति न संशयः।। 33।।

yo bhaktyārcayate'dhyātmarāmāyaṇamatandritaḥ /
dine dine'śvamedhasya phalaṃ tasya bhavenmune //
yadṛcchayāpi yo'dhyātmarāmāyaṇamanādarāt /
anyataḥ śṛṇuyānmartyaḥ so'pi mucyeta pātakāt //
namaskaroti yo'dhyātmarāmāyaṇamadūrataḥ /
sarvadevārcanaphalaṃ sa prāpnoti na saṁśayaḥ //

Oh sage (Narad)! Those people who worship/adore Adhyatma Ramayan with devotion and free from indolence/laziness, get the reward (fruit, benefit) of doing the great Horse-Sacrifice (31). Those who listen to Adhyatma Ramayan from others, even irregularly and with doubts in their minds (about its authenticity, or hear it with scorn and skepticism), are also freed from (the effects of) sins (32). Those who go near Adhyatma Ramayan and bow their heads in reverence and pay their obeisance to it, get the fruits (rewards) equivalent to worshipping all the Gods put together (i.e. the rewards are equivalent to worshipping all the Gods simultaneously)—there is no doubt or confusion about it (33).

लिखित्वा पुस्तकेऽध्यात्मरामायणमशेषतः। यो दद्याद्रामभक्तेभ्यस्तस्य पुण्यफलं शृणु।। 34।।
अधीतेषु च वेदेषु शास्त्रेषु व्याकृतेषु च। यत्फलं दुर्लभं लोके तत्फलं तस्य सम्भवेत्।। 35।।

likhitvā pustake'dhyātmarāmāyaṇamaśeṣataḥ /
yo dadyādrāmabhaktebhyastasya puṇyaphalaṃ śṛṇu //
adhīteṣu ca vedeṣu śāstreṣu vyākṛteṣu ca /
yatphalaṃ durlabhaṃ loke tatphalaṃ tasya sambhavet //

'Those who write the whole (complete) book of Adhyatma Ramayan and give it to other devotees of Lord Ram—now listen to the fruits (rewards, benefits) which they get (34). They get that reward which is difficult to get even by reading (and studying) the Vedas and preaching (discoursing on) the Shastras (scriptures) in this world (35).

एकादशीदिनेऽध्यात्मरामायणमुपोषितः। यो रामभक्तः सदसि व्याकरोति नरोत्तमः।। 36।।
तस्य पुण्यफलं वक्ष्ये शृणु वैष्णवसत्तम। प्रत्यक्षरं तु गायत्रीपुरश्चर्याफलं भवेत्।। 37।।

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ekādaśīdine'dhyātmarāmāyaṇamupoṣitaḥ /
yo rāmabhaktaḥ sadasi vyākaroti narottamaḥ //
tasya puṇyaphalaṃ vakṣye śṛṇu vaiṣṇavasattama /
pratyakṣaraṃ tu gāyatrīpuraścaryāphalaṃ bhavet //

Oh the best among Vaishnav saints (Narad)! Listen—that devotee of Lord Ram, who is regarded as the best among humans, and he who preaches the story of Adhyatma Ramayan in an assembly of faithfuls on the Ikadashi day after observing a fast (i.e. goes without eating and preaches with an empty stomach after observing religious vows and austerities), shall get the benefit of reciting the Gyatri Mantra[1] with the utterance of every word of this holy book (36-37).

[Note—[1]The famous Gayatri Mantra is a hymn in honour of Brahm composed in the typical style of a 'Anushtup Chanda'. That Mantra is the following, 'OM BHURBHUVAHA SVAHA[1], TATSAVIUR-VARENYAM[2], BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAHI[3], DHIYO YO NAH PRACODAYAT[4]'. It means 'OM is the supreme, transcendental Brahm. He is the lord of creation of the terrestrial, the celestial and heavenly worlds. That Brahm is luminous like the Sun. He is excellent, the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, and a divine entity. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire our intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that we are purified and move on the righteous and noble path'. The four phrases of the Gayatri Chanda are clearly marked by small numerals in this Mantra. This Mantra appears in the Rig Veda (3/62/10), the Sam Veda (1462), and Yajur Veda (3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/6).
There are 24 Rishis (seers), 24 Chandas (metres), 24 Devtas (patron deities), 24 Shaktis (divine powers), 24 Varnas (colours or shades), 24 Tattvas (essential element) and 24 Mudras (postures) of the Gayatri Mantra.]

उपवासव्रतं कृत्वा श्रीरामनवमीदिने। रात्रौ जागरितोऽध्यात्मरामायणमनन्यधीः।
यः पठेच्छृणुयाद्वापि तस्य पुण्यं वदाम्यहम्।।38।।
कुरुक्षेत्रादिनिखिलपुण्यतीर्थेष्वनेकशः। आत्मतुल्यं धनं सूर्यग्रहणे सर्वतोमुखे।।39।।
विप्रेभ्योव्यासतुल्येभ्यो दत्त्वा यत्फलमश्नुते। तत्फलं सम्भवेत्तस्य सत्यं सत्यं न संशयः।।40।।
यो गायते मुदाध्यात्मरामायणमहर्निशम्। आज्ञां तस्य प्रतीक्षन्ते देवा इन्द्रपुरोगमाः।।41।।

upavāsavrataṃ kṛtvā śrīrāmanavamīdine /
rātrau jāgarito'dhyātmarāmāyaṇamananyadhīḥ /
yaḥ paṭhecchṛṇuyādvāpi tasya puṇyaṃ vadāmyaham //

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kurukṣetrādinikhilapuṇyatīrtheṣvanekaśaḥ /
ātmatulyaṃ dhanaṃ sūryagrahaṇe sarvatomukhe //
viprebhyovyāsatulyebhyo dattvā yatphalamaśnute /
tatphalaṃ sambhavettasya satyaṃ satyaṃ na saṁśayaḥ //
yo gāyate mudādhyātmarāmāyaṇamaharniśam /
ājñāṃ tasya pratīkṣante devā indrapurogamāḥ //

Now I shall tell you the auspicious reward begot by him who either listens to or reads Adhyatma Ramayan with deep concentration on the 'Ram Navmi' day (which commemorates the birth of Lord Ram; it falls roughly in late March or early April) after observing the ritual of fasting and keeping awake during the night (38). The reward is equivalent to giving repeated charities to Brahmins who are as exalted as sage Vyas, of amounts (i.e. quantum of wealth) which are the same as possessed by the donor (i.e. half of one's wealth is given as alms), at the time of total solar eclipse at any one of the holy pilgrim sites such as Kurushetra etc.—there is no doubt or confusion about it. It is the truth (39-40). Those persons who sing the hymns of Adhyatma Ramayan with a cheerful mind and intellect, even Indra (the king of Gods) and other Gods are eager for his orders (i.e. they are eager to fulfill all his wishes) (41).

पठन्प्रत्यहमध्यात्मरामायणमनुव्रतः। यद्यत्करोति तत्कर्म ततः कोटिगुणं भवेत्।। 42।।
तत्र श्रीरामहृदयं यः पठेत्सुसमाहितः। स ब्रह्मघ्नोऽपि पूतात्मा त्रिभिरेव दिनैर्भवेत्।। 43।।

paṭhanpratyahamadhyātmarāmāyaṇamanuvrataḥ /
yadyatkaroti tatkarma tataḥ koṭiguṇaṃ bhavet //
tatra śrīrāmahṛdayaṃ yaḥ paṭhetsusamāhitaḥ /
sa brahmaghno'pi pūtātmā tribhireva dinairbhavet //

Any good and auspicious deeds done by a person become manifold (literally multiplied millions of) times by regularly reading Adhyatma Ramayan as per established method (42). Those who whole heartedly, with deep faith, devotion, conviction and concentration read this (spiritual book) can get rid of the burden (evil effects of sin) of killing (or injuring, harming) a Brahmin in a short period of three days only (43).

श्रीरामहृदयं यस्तु हनूमत्प्रतिमान्तिके। त्रिःपठेत्प्रत्यहं मौनी स सर्वेप्सितभाग्भवेत्।। 44।।
पठन् श्रीरामहृदयं तुलस्यश्वत्थयोर्यदि। प्रत्यक्षरं प्रकुर्वीत ब्रह्महत्यानिवर्तनम्।। 45।।

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śrīrāmahṛdayaṃ yastu hanūmatpratimāntike/
triḥpaṭhetpratyahaṃ maunī sa sarvepsitabhāgbhavet//
paṭhan śrīrāmahṛdayaṃ tulasyaśvatthayoryadi/
pratyakṣaraṃ prakurvīta brahmahatyānivartanam//

Those who read or recite this 'Ram Hridaya' [literally verses which highlight the essential, absolute truth about Sri Ram, or which form the core philosophy related to Lord Ram] three times daily in front of an image of Hanuman (the most dear devotee of the Lord and an incarnation of Lord Shiva who manifested himself to serve the Lord during his sojourn in this world)—surely get all their desired fruits or rewards (44). Besides it, if any one recites (or reads) this 'Ram Hridaya' near a Tulsi (holy Basil plant) or a Pipal (Banyan tree; the sacred fig tree)—then he gets rid of his horrible sins such as the killing (or harming) of a Brahmin at the pronunciation (utterance) of every single word of these sacred hymns (of Adhyatma Ramayan) (45).

[Note—Ram Hridaya has been described in Baal Kand, Canto 1.]

श्रीरामगीतामाहात्म्यं कृत्स्नं जानाति शङ्करः। तदर्धं गिरिजा वेत्ति तदर्धं वेद्म्यहं मुने।। 46।।
तत्तेकिञ्चित्प्रवक्ष्यामि कृत्स्नं वक्तुं न शक्यते।
यज्ज्ञात्वा तत्क्षणाल्लोकश्चित्तशुद्धिमवाप्नुयात्।। 47।।

śrīrāmagītāmāhātmyaṃ kṛtsnaṃ jānāti śaṅkaraḥ/
tadardhaṃ girijā vetti tadardhaṃ vedmyahaṃ mune//
tattekiñcitpravakṣyāmi kṛtsnaṃ vaktuṃ na śakyate/
yajjñātvā tatkṣaṇāllokaścittaśuddhimavāpnuyāt//

'Oh sage! The glory, importance and potential powers of 'Ram Gita' is fully known to Lord Shiva only; half of what he knows is known to Parvati, and half of that (i.e. a quarter of what Shiva knows) is known to me (46). That is why I cannot tell you the whole of it; still I shall narrate a fraction (part) of it, by knowing which the mind and intellect instantly get purified (47).

[Note—Ram Gita is narrated in Uttar Kand, Canto 5.]

श्रीरामगीता यत्पापं न नाशयति नारद। तनन नश्यति तीर्थादौ लोके क्वापि कदाचन।
तत्र पश्याम्यहं लोके मार्गमाणोऽपि सर्वदा।। 48।।
रामेणोपनिषत्सिन्धुमुन्मथ्योत्पादितां मुदा। लक्ष्मणायार्पितां गीतासुधां पीत्वामरो भवेत्।। 49।।

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śrīrāmagītā yatpāpaṃ na nāśayati nārada /
tanana naśyati tīrthādau loke kvāpi kadācana /
tanna paśyāmyahaṃ loke mārgamāṇo'pi sarvadā //
rāmeṇopaniṣatsindhumunmathyotpāditāṃ mudā /
lakṣmaṇāyārpitāṃ gītāsudhāṃ pītvāmaro bhavet //

Oh Narad! That sin which cannot be destroyed by 'Ram Gita' can never be eliminated (removed) by any pilgrim site or going on any pilgrimage in this world. I cannot see (find) such a sin inspite of my meticulous attempt to search for it (i.e. there is no sin or evil which cannot be destroyed by the good effects of 'Ram Gita') (48). Sri Ram had extracted (deduced, culled, derived and inferred) it after churning (i.e. deeply studying) the ocean (of vast body of knowledge) of the Upanishads (Vedant), and thereafter most gladly (willingly, happily, as a special favour) gave it to his dear brother Laxman. [What better and easy method for liberation from sins can ever be made available?] (49).

जमदग्निसुतः पूर्वं कार्तवीर्यवधेच्छया। धनुर्विद्यामभ्यसितुं महेशस्यान्तिके वसन्।। 50।।
अधीयमानां पार्वत्या रामगीतां प्रयत्नतः। श्रुत्वा गृहीत्वाशु पठन्नारायणकलामगात्।। 51।।

jamadagnisutaḥ pūrvaṃ kārtavīryavadhecchayā /
dhanurvidyāmabhyasituṃ maheśasyāntike vasan //
adhīyamānāṃ pārvatyā rāmagītāṃ prayatnataḥ /
śrutvā gṛhītvāśu paṭhannārāyaṇakalāmagāt //

In ancient times, the son of Jamdagni, famously known as Parashuram, stayed with Shiva to practice archery with the avowed aim of slaying (the demon) Sahastrarjun (50). At the time he had overheard Parvati studying (i.e. reciting, reading) 'Ram Gita', had listened to it carefully with due concentration and diligence, brought it to his heart (i.e. learnt it and imbibed its true spiritual message and divine glory), and as a result of its reward, he became like another manifestation of (i.e. almost similar to) Lord Narayan-Vishnu himself, in all his potent and majestic powers, by repeatedly practicing it (i.e. reading, reciting and implementing the philosophy of Ram Gita) (51).

ब्रह्महत्यादिपापानां निष्कृतिं यदि वाञ्छति। रामगीतां मासमात्रं पठित्वा मुच्यते नरः।। 52।।
दुष्प्रतिग्रहदुर्भोज्यदुरालापादिसम्भवम्। पापं यत्तत्कीर्तनेन रामगीता विनाशयेत्।। 53।।

brahmahatyādipāpānāṃ niṣkṛtiṃ yadi vāñchati /
rāmagītāṃ māsamātraṃ paṭhitvā mucyate naraḥ //

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duṣpratigrahadurbhojyadurālāpādisambhavam /
pāpaṃ yattatkīrtanena rāmagītā vināśayet //

If anyone wishes to free himself from the horrible effects of terrible sins like the killing (harming) of a Brahmin should recite (read and sing), with devotion, dedication and faith, the sacred hymns of 'Ram Gita' for one month—by doing so, he shall be freed of it (the sins and their horrendous effects) (52). The sins which result from improper charity (donation to unworthy persons or purpose), eating prohibited food (such as wine, meat etc.) and using foul and uncouth language as well as unworthy and sinful use of the faculty of speech (such as abuses, profanities and expletives; malicious gossip, hearsay, falsehood, lies and deceits) are eliminated by the recitation of the verses of 'Ram Gita' (53).

शालग्रामशिलाग्रे च तुलस्यश्वत्थसन्निधौ। यतीनां पुरतस्तद्वद्रामगीतां पठेत्तु यः।। 54।।
स तत्फलमवाप्नोति यद्वाचोऽपि न गोचरम्।। 55।।

śālagrāmaśilāgre ca tulasyaśvatthasannidhau /
yatīnāṃ puratastadvadrāmagītāṃ paṭhettu yaḥ //
sa tatphalamavāpnoti yadvāco'pi na gocaram //

Those persons who read the sacred hymns of 'Ram Gita' in front of a Shaligram-stone (which is a rounded piece of stone representing the formless, attributeless aspect of the Lord), a Tulsi (Basil) or a Pipal (Banyan; sacred fig) tree, and a 'Yati' (ascetic), shall get the fruit (benefit, reward) which is so huge, measureless and beyond expectation that it is not the subject matter of one's speech (i.e. it cannot be described in words) (54-55).

रामगीतां पठन्भक्त्या यः श्राद्धे भोजयेद् द्विजान्।
तस्य ते पितरः सर्वे यान्ति विष्णोः परं पदम्।। 56।।
एकादश्यां निराहारो नियतो द्वादशीदिने। स्थित्वागस्त्यतरोर्मूले रामगीतां पठेत्तु यः।
स एव राघवः साक्षात्सर्वदेवैश्च पूज्यते।। 57।।

rāmagītāṃ paṭhanbhaktyā yaḥ śrāddhe bhojayed dvijān /
tasya te pitaraḥ sarve yānti viṣṇoḥ paraṃ padma //
ekādaśyāṃ nirāhāro niyato dvādaśīdine /
sthitvāgastyatarormūle rāmagītāṃ paṭhettu yaḥ /
sa eva rāghavaḥ sākṣātsarvadevaiśca pūjyate //

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Those who read or recite the sacred hymns of 'Ram Gita' with great reverence, devotion and faith during the days of 'Sraaddha' (a period when offerings are made to the ancestors) and then give food to Brahmins (i.e. elderly, learned people), all his ancestors find a place in the abode of Lord Vishnu (i.e. go to heaven) (56). That person who observes fast, self restraint and abstinence on the Ikadashi day (i.e. the eleventh day of the waxing and waning phases of the moon), and on the next day, that is on the Dwadashi day (which is the twelfth day of both the waxing and waning phases of the moon), reads and recites the sacred hymns of 'Ram Gita' with due faith, devotion and reverence while sitting under the Agastya tree (*aeschynomena grandi flora*), becomes so exalted and honoured that he is given the same respect that is due to Lord Ram himself; all the Gods worship, adore and praise him (57).

विना दानं विना ध्यानं विना तीर्थावगाहनम्। रामगीतां नरोऽधीत्य तदनन्तफलं लभेत्।। 58।।
बहुना किमिहोक्तेन शृणु नारद तत्त्वतः। श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणेतिहासागमशतानि च।
अर्हन्ति नाल्पमध्यात्मरामायणकलामपि।। 59।।

vinā dānaṃ vinā dhyānaṃ vinā tīrthāvagāhanam/
rāmagītāṃ naro'dhītya tadanantaphalaṃ labhet//
bahunā kimihoktena śṛṇu nārada tattvataḥ/
śrutismṛtipurāṇetihāsāgamaśatāni ca/
arhanti nālpamadhyātmarāmāyaṇakalāmapi//

One gets the immense (huge) rewards that are got by making great charities, doing meditation, going on a pilgrimage and holy bathing in holy rivers even without actually doing them by regularly reading and reciting, with due devotion, reverence and faith, the sacred hymns of 'Ram Gita' (58). Oh Narad! What more can be said; listen to what is the fact—all the Vedas, Upanishads, Purans, 'Itihas' (religious histories) and hundreds of other scriptures cannot compare themselves with even one humble aspect (effect, benefit, power, potent, reward, influence or Canto, verse or hymn) of Adhyatma Ramayan' (59).

अध्यात्मरामचरितस्य मुनीश्वराय माहात्म्यमेतदुदितं कमलासनेन।
यः श्रद्धया पठति वा शृणुयात्स मर्त्यः प्राप्नोति विष्णुपदवीं सुरपूज्यमानः।। 60।।

adhyātmarāmacaritasya munīśvarāya
māhātmyametaduditaṃ kamalāsanena/

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yaḥ śraddhyā paṭhati vā śṛṇuyātsa martyaḥ
prāpnoti viṣṇupadavīṃ surapūjyamānaḥ //

Lord Brahma has narrated (described) the glories, fame, importance, potentials, powers, effects, prowess and renown of this holy spiritual treatise called Adhyatma Ramayan to the most exalted sage Narad. Those persons, who hear or read it with due devotion, faith, reverence and honour, shall be worshipped, respected and adored by Gods, and shall attain the holy feet (abode) of Lord Vishnu (60).

[Note :—The importance of Adhyatma Ramayan has being described in Lanka Kand, Canto 16, verse nos. 35-49 also.]

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BAAL KAND

Baal Kand — Canto 1

Ram Hriday (The divine essence of Lord Ram)

यः पृथ्वीभरवारणाय दिविजैः संप्रार्थितश्चिन्मयः
संजातः पृथिवीतले रविकुले मायामनुष्योऽव्ययः।
निश्चक्रं हतराक्षसः पुनरगाद् ब्रह्मत्वमाद्यं स्थिरां
कीर्तिं पापहरां विधाय जगतां तं जानकीशं भजे।।1।।

yaḥ pṛthvībharavāraṇāya divijaiḥ saṃprārthitaścinmayaḥ
sañjātaḥ pṛthivītale ravikule māyāmanuṣyo'vyayaḥ/
niścakraṃ hatarākṣasaḥ punaragād brahmatvamādyaṃ sthirāṃ
kīrtiṃ pāpaharāṃ vidhāya jagatāṃ taṃ jānakīśaṃ bhaje//

I worship Janki Nath (Sri Ram, the Lord of Sita), the Lord who is almighty, intelligent and indestructible, who had manifested on the surface of this earth in the Sun-race with a human-like image (form with a body) at the behest of Gods to remove the burden of this earth, and who—having slayed (destroyed) the multitudes of (unrighteous, sinful and cruel) demons and having established his stable and steady stupendous fame and magnificent glories which are capable of destroying sins and their horrible effects—had once again merged (re-entered) in his original, eternal, absolute, transcendental form of the supreme 'Brahm' (who is formless, attributeless, unqualified, all-pervading, all-encompassing supreme Truth or absolute Reality in the creation) (1).

विश्वोद्भवस्थितिलयादिषु हेतुमेकं मायाश्रयं विगतमायमचिन्त्यमूर्तिम्।
आनन्दसान्द्रममलं निजबोधरूपं सीतापतिं विदिततत्त्वमहं नमामि।।2।।

viśvodbhavasthitilayādiṣu hetumekaṃ
māyāśrayaṃ vigatamāyamacintyamūrtim/
ānandasāndramamalaṃ nijabodharūpaṃ
sītāpatiṃ viditatattvamahaṃ namāmi //

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I bow my head reverentially (to pay obeisance) to Sitapati (Lord of Sita, i.e. Sri Ram) who is an expert in the knowledge of the essence and elementary principles of the supreme Truth and absolute Reality in creation, who is the only cause of the beginning, existence and annihilation of the universe, who is beyond Maya (the trap of ignorance ignited delusions and deceptions) inspite of being its abode or shelter (because Maya has its origin in and is dependent on the supreme and transcendental Brahm who created it at the very beginning of creation), whose true form cannot be imagined and comprehended, who is a treasury (abode, centre, fount) of bliss, peace and tranquility, who has no attributes and epithets, no honours and titles (to define and describe him in any way), is without all faults, blemishes and reproof associated with this creation, and who is radiantly self-illuminated (2).

पठन्ति ये नित्यमनन्यचेतसः शृण्वन्ति चाध्यात्मिकसंज्ञितं शुभम्।
रामायणं सर्वपुराणसंमतं निर्धूतपापा हरिमेव यान्ति ते।।3।।

paṭhanti ye nityamananyacetasaḥ śṛṇvanti
cādhyātmikasaṁjñitaṃ śubham /
rāmāyaṇaṃ sarvapurāṇasaṃmataṃ
nirdhūtapāpā harimeva yānti te //

Those persons who daily and regularly read and hear, with due concentration, faith and devotion, this spiritually divine treatise called Adhyatma Ramayan, which is pristine pure, sublime, holy and has the divine sanctity (sanction, approval, endorsement) of the various Purans, become free of sins and attain the exalted state of reaching the abode of Lord Hari, or Lord Vishnu, the sustainer whose manifestation Lord Ram is (i.e. such persons get emancipation and salvation) (3).

[Note—Lord Vishnu is called, amongst his other names, 'Hari'. The word means one who takes away, one who steals, one who removes and eliminates. The Lord is so merciful and benevolent that he removes the sins and their bad effects from his devotees, he takes them from the horrendous cycle of birth and death towards emancipation and salvation, he eliminates all evil forces in creation and restores righteousness and auspiciousness.]

अध्यात्मरामायणमेव नित्यं पठेद्यदीच्छेद्भवबन्धमुक्तिम्।
गवां सहस्रायुतकोटिदानात् फलं लभेद्यः शृणुयात्स नित्यम्।।4।।

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पुरारिगिरिसंभूता श्रीरामार्णवसङ्गता। अध्यात्मरामगङ्गेयं पुनाति भुवनत्रयम्।।5।।

adhyātmarāmāyaṇameva nityaṃ paṭhedyadīcchedbhavabandhamuktim /
gavāṃ sahasrāyutakoṭidānāt phalaṃ labhedyaḥ śṛṇuyātsa nityam //
purārigirisaṁbhūtā śrīrāmārṇavasaṅgatā /
adhyātmarāmagaṅgeyaṃ punāti bhuvanatrayam //

If any one wishes to get liberation from the shackles of this entrapping, deluding mundane world, then he should regularly read (with devotion, faith and reverence) this Adhyatma Ramayan daily. Those people who listen to it regularly (daily) get the fruit (reward) which is equivalent to donating millions of cows (4). Having emerged from the mountain symbolically represented by Lord Shiva, and flowing down to and merging with the ocean represented by Lord Ram, this river representing Adhyatma Ramayan purifies the 3 worlds (subterranean, terrestrial, celestial) (5).

कैलासाग्रे कदाचिद्रविशतविमले मन्दिरे रत्नपीठे संविष्टं
ध्याननिष्ठं त्रिनयनमभयं सेवितं सिद्धसङ्घैः।
देवी वामाङ्कसंस्था गिरिवरतनया पार्वती भक्तिनम्रा
प्राहेदं देवमीशं सकलमलहरं वाक्यमानन्दकन्दम्।।6।।

kailāsāgre kadācidraviśatavimale mandire ratnapīṭhe saṁviṣṭaṃ
dhyānaniṣṭhaṃ trinayanamabhayaṃ sevitaṃ siddhasaṅghaiḥ /
devī vāmāṅkasaṁsthā girivaratanayā pārvatī bhaktinamrā
prāhedaṃ devamīśaṃ sakalamalaharaṃ vākyamānandakandam //

Once upon a time, on the summit of Mt. Kailash, in an auspicious palace which had the splendour and majesty equivalent to hundreds of suns, was seated the Lord with the three eyes (i.e. Lord Shiva) on a gem-studded throne in a meditative posture, surrounded (or served) by a crowd of Siddhas (mystics). He is always fearless, is the remover (eliminator) of all sins (or one who literally eats away all sins and evils), is the root of all bliss, peace and tranquility, and is the Lord of all the Gods. On his left was seated Parvati, the daughter of Giri (the king of mountains). She said the following words most humbly, prayerfully and full of devotion—(6).

नमोऽस्तु ते देव जगन्निवास सर्वात्मदृक् त्वं परमेश्वरोऽसि।
पृच्छामि तत्त्वं पुरुषोत्तमस्य सनातनं त्वं च सनातनोऽसि।।7।।

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गोप्यं यदत्यन्तमनन्यवाच्यं वदन्ति भक्तेषु महानुभावाः।
तदप्यहोऽहं तव देव भक्ता प्रियोऽसि मे त्वं वद यत्तु पृष्टम्।।8।।

pārvatyuvāca

namo'stu te deva jagannivāsa sarvātmadṛk tvaṃ parameśvaro'si /
pṛcchāmi tattvaṃ puruṣottamasya sanātanaṃ tvaṃ ca sanātano'si //
gopyaṃ yadatyantamananyavācyaṃ vadanti bhakteṣu mahānubhāvāḥ /
tadapyaho'haṃ tava deva bhaktā priyo'si me tvaṃ vada yattu pṛṣṭam //

Parvati said, 'Oh Lord! Oh the abode (shelter) of the world! I bow before you with palms joined together in submission. You are a witness to the inner thoughts of all, and are the supreme Lord. I want to ask about the elementary, eternal and absolute truth about Sri Purushottam (literally, the best amongst the exalted males in creation) because you are also eternal and the truthful (7). Great souls disclose to their ardent followers even the greatest of secrets (or subjects) which are not fit to be divulged to others. Oh Lord! I am also your devotee; you are most dear to me. Hence, describe all that I have asked you (8).

ज्ञानं सविज्ञानमथानुभक्तिवैराग्ययुक्तं च मितं विभास्वत्।
जानाम्यहं योषिदपि त्वदुक्तं यथा तथा ब्रूहि तरन्ति येन।।9।।

jñānaṃ savijñānamathānubhaktivairāgyayuktaṃ ca mitaṃ vibhāsvat /
jānāmyahaṃ yoṣidapi tvaduktaṃ yathā tathā brūhi taranti yena //

That sterling wisdom (or knowledge, erudition, awareness) which helps a person to cross over this (deluding, mundane) ocean-like world—a knowledge which is self-illuminating and self-radiant, which has devotion and renunciation as its integral characteristic, and which leads to self realisation—please narrate it to me in few words, using simple logic and language, so that I can easily understand and grasp it, inspite of my being a woman (who is not supposed to be so proficient in easily comprehending metaphysics and spiritual matters) (9).

पृच्छामि चान्यच्च परं रहस्यं तदेव चाग्रे वद वारिजाक्ष।
श्रीरामचन्द्रेऽखिललोकसारे भक्तिर्दृढा नौर्भवति प्रसिद्धा।।10।।

pṛcchāmi cānyacca paraṃ rahasyaṃ tadeva cāgre vada vārijākṣa /
śrīrāmacandre'khilalokasāre bhaktirdṛḍhā naurbhavati prasiddhā //

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Oh the lotus-eyed one (Lord Shiva)! I ask you about one most secret of mysteries; please describe it first. It is well established that pristine pure, true and uncorrupted devotion, dedication and submission for Sri Ram, who is the essence and soul of the entire creation, is like a strong and sturdy boat for crossing his ocean-like mundane world (10).

भक्तिः प्रसिद्धा भवमोक्षणाय नान्यत्ततः साधनमस्ति किञ्चित्।
तथापि हृत्संशयबन्धनं मे विभेत्तुमर्हस्यमलोक्तिभिस्त्वम्।। 11।।
वदन्ति रामं परमेकमाद्यं निरस्तमायागुणसंप्रवाहम्।
भजन्ति चाहर्निशमप्रमत्ताः परं पदं यान्ति तथैव सिद्धाः।। 12।।

bhaktiḥ prasiddhā bhavamokṣaṇāya nānyattataḥ sādhanamasti kiñcit /
tathāpi hṛtsaṁśayabandhanaṃ me vibhettumarhasyamaloktibhistvam //
vadanti rāmaṃ paramekamādyaṃ nirastamāyāguṇasampravāham /
bhajanti cāharniśamapramattāḥ paraṃ padaṃ yānti tathaiva siddhāḥ //

To free oneself from the shackles of this mundane, artificial and ensnaring world, sincere devotion for, honest submission to, and dedicated worship of the supreme Lord are the only famed and well established way; these are the medium or the instruments to achieve this aim. There is no better way to do it than this. Inspite of that, I earnestly request you to cut and remove the knot of whatever doubts and confusions that might be present in my heart with your wise and enlightened words (11). The Siddhas (mystics, experts) who are wise, erudite, enlightened and free of all misconceptions, who do not fall into the trap of hearsay and falsehoods, who know the essence and reality of the things as they stand, call Sri Ram the most exalted Supreme Being who is matchless, is without a second or parallel, is the primary cause of all that exists, and is beyond the attributes and characteristic 'Gunas' (qualities and virtues) associated with Nature. At the same time, these wise and enlightened ones (i.e. the Siddhas) attain the supreme state represented by the Lord's holy feet by worshipping, remembering and adoring him, by singing his divine glories and remaining ever engrossed in him day and night (12).

[Note—Pravati essentially says that though on the one hand it is possible to attain emancipation and salvation by having devotion and submission for the Lord, if anyone has any trace of doubts in his mind it is better to get rid of it by listening to the divine discourses, and the

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easiest way to achieve this end is to hear the divine story of the Lord, because pure and dry spiritual discourse may not be understandable by an ordinary person but when it is intermingled and said in the form of an interesting story, everyone will listen to it and the message and moral would be east to grasp. On the other hand there are wise and erudite people who are well versed in spiritualism and metaphysics, but still they rely upon 'Bhakti', or having devotion and submission for the Lord as a means for attaining emancipation and salvation. She implies here that both these paths are valid and effective; a judicious mixture is needed to achieve the aim of final liberation and deliverance for the soul of the creature from the fetters that shackle it to the entrapping world.]

वदन्ति केचित्परमोऽपि रामः स्वाविद्यया संवृतमात्मसंज्ञम्।
जानाति नात्मानमतः परेण सम्बोधितो वेद परात्मतत्त्वम्।। 13।।

vadanti kecitparamo'pi rāmaḥ svāvidyayā saṁvṛtamātmasaṁjñam /
jānāti nātmānamataḥ pareṇa sambodhito veda parātmatattvam //

But some say that despite being the supreme, absolute, all-knowing and omniscient Lord (Brahm), Sri Ram did not realise (i.e. became aware of) the nature of his 'true self' because of being covered (enveloped, encased, sheathed) by Maya which is his own delusion creating powers. That is why he had to listen to spiritual, metaphysical and theological discourses and teachings (of his Guru Vashistha and others wise teachers) in order to understand and realise the supreme irrefutable 'truth' about his own real self as propounded by the Vedas (13).

[Note (1) This discourse between Sri Ram and his Guru Vashistha forms the text of the treatise called 'Yog Vashistha'. (2) The concept of Maya has been elaborately dealt with Lord Ram himself in Aranya Kand, Cantos 2 and 3.]

यदि स्म जानाति कुतो विलापः सीताकृतेऽनेन कृतः परेण।
जानाति नैवं यदि केन सेव्यः समो हि सर्वैरपि जीवजातैः।। 14।।
अत्रोत्तरं किं विदितं भवद्भिस्तदब्रूत मे संशयभेदि वाक्यम्।। 15।।

yadi sma jānāti kuto vilāpaḥ sītākṛte'nena kṛtaḥ pareṇa/
jānāti naivaṃ yadi kena sevyaḥ samo hi sarvairapi jīvajātaiḥ//
atrottaraṃ kiṃ viditaṃ bhavadbhistadbrūta me saṁśayabhedi vākyam//

Hence, I want to know that if he was aware about the elementary

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truth of existence, the fundamental tenets of the scriptures, and the truthful, conscious and real nature of the pure-self, why then did he woefully lament for Sita so much? And if he was not a wise, enlightened, self-realised and attained soul, then he was like other ordinary, mortal beings. Why then should he be worshipped, adored and honoured? What is your view (opinion) in this matter, please tell me in a language consisting of simple words so that my doubts and confusions are dispelled' (14-15).

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

धन्यासि भक्तासि परात्मनस्त्वं यज्ज्ञातुमिच्छा तव रामतत्त्वम्।
पुरा न केनाप्यभिचोदितोऽहं वक्तुं रहस्यं परमं निगूढम्।।16।।
त्वयाद्य भक्त्या परिनोदितोऽहं वक्ष्ये नमस्कृत्य रघूत्तमं ते।
रामः परात्मा प्रकृतेरनादिरानन्द एकः पुरुषोत्तमो हि।।17।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

dhanyāsi bhaktāsi parātmanastvaṃ yajjñātumicchā tava rāmatattvam/
purā na kenāpyabhicodito'haṃ vaktuṃ rahasyaṃ paramaṃ nigūḍham//
tvayādya bhaktyā parinodito'haṃ vakṣye namaskṛtya raghūttamaṃ te/
rāmaḥ parātmā prakṛteranādirānanda ekaḥ puruṣottamo hi//

Lord Shiva said, 'Oh Goddess! You are the blessed one. You are a great devotee of the supreme, absolute, transcendental Lord that you wish to know about the essential or elementary truth about the true nature of Sri Ram. Before this, no one had asked me to describe his most difficult and mysterious but sacred secret (16). Today you have earnestly asked me with due reverence and eagerness in your heart. Hence, I shall answer your questions after praying and paying obeisance to Sri Ram (who is the best in the clan of Raghu). Sri Ram is without doubt beyond Nature, is without a beginning, is an abode/ treasury of bliss, peace and tranquility, is matchless and peerless, and is the best and most supreme, exalted, absolute transcendental Lord (who had manifested himself as the best human that ever existed on this earth) (17).

स्वमायया कृत्स्नमिदं हि सृष्ट्वा नभोवदन्तर्बहिरास्थितो यः।
सर्वान्तरस्थोऽपि निगूढ आत्मा स्वामायया सृष्टमिदं विचष्टे।।18।।
जगन्ति नित्यं परितो भ्रमन्ति यत्सन्निधौ चुम्बकलोहवद्धि।
एतन्न जानन्ति विमूढचित्ताः स्वाविद्यया संवृतमानसा ये।।19।।

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svamāyayā kṛtsnamidaṃ hi sṛṣṭvā nabhovadantarbahirāsthito yaḥ/
sarvāntarastho'pi nigūḍha ātmā svāmāyayā sṛṣṭamidaṃ vicaṣṭe//
jaganti nityaṃ parito bhramanti yatsannidhau cumbakalohavaddhi/
etanna jānanti vimūḍhacittāḥ svāvidyayā saṁvṛtamānasā ye//

He has created this world out of his own Maya (power of creating delusions; cosmic creative energy) and is present inside and outside of it like the sky (or space, void—i.e. he encompasses everything, he is uniformly diffused in everything, he soaks everything that ever existed and that would ever exist, and he is inherently and integrally present inside as well as outside of it much like the sky or space that is present inside a pitcher as well as outside of it as nothing exists outside the element known as space or sky; even the planets, stars and the galaxies of the cosmos are embedded in the void of the sky). He lives inside all creatures in the form of a microcosmic soul or Atma from where he governs (i.e. controls, regulates, commands, activates and keeps on the move, administers) this world (18). Even as an inert and lifeless piece of iron becomes active (starts moving and showing powers of attracting other iron pieces) when in contact with, or simply being in the vicinity of a magnet, so do this world always moves around (roams, wanders about) endlessly and aimlessly by the mere wish (or influence) of his (delusion creating) powers called Maya. Those idiots or ignorant ones whose hearts (emotions and thoughts; the nature, inherent temperaments and inclinations of a creature that influences the mind and intellect) are covered by a sheath of ignorance (induced by delusions), do not recognise that supreme, absolute, transcendental Soul called 'Ram' (19).

[Note :—See also Lanka Kand, Canto 14, verse no. 29.]

स्वाज्ञानमप्यात्मनि शुद्धबुद्धे स्वारोपयन्तीह निरस्तमाये।
संसारमेवानुसरन्ति ते वै पुत्रादिसक्ताः पुरुकर्मयुक्ताः।।20।।
जानन्ति नैवं हृदये स्थितं वै चामीकरं कण्ठगतं यथाज्ञाः।
यथाप्रकाशो न तु विद्यते रवौ ज्योतिःस्वभावे परमेश्वरे तथा।
विशुद्धविज्ञानघने रघूत्तमेऽविद्या कथं स्यात्परतः परात्मनि।।21।।

svājñānamapyātmani śuddhabuddhe svāropayantīha nirastamāye/
saṁsāramevānusaranti te vai putrādisaktāḥ purukarmayuktāḥ//
jānanti naiva hṛdaye sthitaṃ vai cāmīkaraṃ kaṇṭhagataṃ yathājñā/

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yathāprakāśo na tu vidyate ravau jyotiḥsvabhāve parameśvare tathā /
viśuddhavijñānaghane raghūttame'vidyā kathaṃ syātparataḥ parātmani //

Those fools and ignorant ones (refer verse 19) impose their ignorance and stupidity even on the Lord who is beyond delusions, and who is most pure and most wise (i.e. they consider him to be as ignorant and stupid as themselves). Such lowly fools who always remain engrossed in the thoughts of and are infatuated by their wives and worry about their sons (i.e. they are shackled to worldly ties), remain busy and entangled in various worldly deeds, as a result of which they always remain dumped in the cycle of birth and death in this mundane, artificial, deluding world (20). Those ignorant and stupid fools do not recognise the supreme Soul called 'Ram' who resides in their heart even as they are not aware of the wooden girdle of beads lying around their necks (which is why they cast slander and doubt on the Lord). As a matter of fact, like darkness cannot exist inside the sun, ignorance too cannot survive or live inside (or in the presence of, or with reference to) the most exalted, supreme and absolute Lord called Parmeshwar, who is none other than the most exalted and supreme Soul (Parmatma) called Sri Ram who has manifested himself as the one who is the best in king Raghu's clan. Lord Ram is therefore beyond Nature; he is a treasury or an abode of the most pure form of knowledge, and is an embodiment of enlightenment and wisdom (21).

यथा हि चाक्षणा भ्रमता गृहादिकं विनष्टदृष्टेर्भ्रमतीव दृश्यते।
तथैव देहेन्द्रियकर्तुरात्मनः कृते परेऽध्यस्य जनो विमुह्यति।।22।।
नाहो न रात्रिः सवितुर्यथा भवेत् प्रकाशरूपाव्यभिचारतः क्वचित्।
ज्ञानं तथाज्ञानमिदं द्वयं हरौ रामे कथं स्थास्यति शुद्धचिद्घने।।23।।

yathā hi cākṣṇā bhramatā gṛhādikaṃ vinaṣṭadṛṣṭerbhramatīva dṛśyate /
tathaiva dehendriyakarturātmanaḥ kṛte pare'dhyasya jano vimuhyati //
nāho na rātriḥ savituryathā bhavet
prakāśarūpāvyabhicārataḥ kvacit /
jñānaṃ tathājñanamidaṃ dvayaṃ harau
rāme kathaṃ sthāsyati śuddhacidghane //

Even as the walls of a room and other objects seem to go round and round in circles in front of the eyes when one spins around, the people similarly accuse the Atma (soul) for the good or bad effects of

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deeds done by their bodies and sense organs, and thereby get trapped in a vortex of illusions. [The man thinks that the room and its objects are turning in circles whereas they are rock steady; the deluded mind is also misled to think that the Atma or soul is doing some deed and is therefore responsible for its fruits or rewards. The fact is quite the contrary.] (22). Even as the dazzling splendour, brilliant radiance and bright illumination of the Sun are inherent and integral to it and no external factors, such as the arrival of the night or the dawn of the day can really effect it or are responsible for it, for the Sun remains uniformly illuminated notwithstanding whether it is day or night, say, how can both 'Gyan' (light of knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment) and 'Agyan' (darkness of ignorance, stupidity, illusions and doubts) live or exist simultaneously in Sri Ram who is the treasure or fount of pure consciousness. [Here, Lord Ram is compared to the Sun, Gyan to the day, and Agyan to the night.] (23).

तस्मात्परानन्दमये रघूत्तमे विज्ञानरूपे हि न विद्यते तमः।
अज्ञानसाक्षिण्यरविन्दलोचने मायाश्रयत्वान्न हि मोहकारणम्।।24।।
अत्र ते कथयिष्यामि रहस्यमपि दुर्लभम्। सीतारामम्रुत्सूनुसंवादं मोक्षसाधनम्।। 25।।

tasmātparānandamaye raghūttame vijñānarūpe hi na vidyate tamaḥ /
ajñānasākṣiṇyaravindalocane māyāśrayatvānna hi mohakāraṇam //
atra te kathayiṣyāmi rahasyamapi durlabham /
sītārāmamarutsūnusaṁvādaṃ mokṣasādhanam //

Hence, there is not even a fraction (i.e. an iota) of ignorance, confusion or doubt in Sri Ram who is an embodiment of supreme bliss, peace and tranquility, who is a treasury of enlightenment and true knowledge, who is a mere neutral and uninterested witness to the existence of ignorance, and who is lotus-eyed. Since he is the creator (and therefore the Lord) of Maya (delusions, illusions caused by ignorance), the latter cannot attract, entice, delude, trap and overcome him (24). Oh Parvati! On this subject, I shall tell you the conversation held between Sita, Sri Ram and Hanuman which is a medium (instrument) of attaining emancipation and salvation, and which dialogue is a great secret and very difficult to know about (25).

पुरा रामायणे रामो रावणं देवकण्टकम्। हत्वा रणे रणश्लाघी सपुत्रबलवाहनम्।। 26।।
सीतया सह सुग्रीवलक्ष्मणाभ्यां समन्वितः। अयोध्यामगमद्रामो हनूमत्प्रमुखैर्वृतः।।27।।
अभिषिक्तः परिवृतो वसिष्ठाद्यैर्महात्मभिः। सिंहासने समासीनः कोटिसूर्यसमप्रभः।।28।।

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purā rāmāyaṇe rāmo rāvaṇaṃ devakaṇṭakam /
hatvā raṇe raṇaślāghī saputrabalavāhanam //
sītayā saha sugrīvalakṣmaṇābhyāṃ samanvitaḥ /
ayodhyāmagamadrāmo hanūmatpramukhairvṛtaḥ //
abhiṣiktaḥ parivṛto vasiṣṭhādyairmahātmabhiḥ /
siṁhāsane samāsīnaḥ koṭisūryasamaprabhaḥ //

In an earlier era, during one of Sri Ram's incarnations when he had slayed the demon Ravana—who was like a painful thorn for the Gods—along with his sons and had crushed his entire army along with its mounts, he had returned to Ayodhya accompanied by Sita, Sugriv, Laxman, Hanuman and other monkeys (26-27) and was crowned there as the king emperor (of Ayodhya). Thereafter, surrounded by Vashistha and other sages and seers, he sat on the throne and looked as splendorous and glorious as crores (millions) of suns (28).

दृष्ट्वा तदा हनूमन्तं प्राञ्जलिं पुरतः स्थितम्। कृतकार्यं निराकाङ्क्षं ज्ञानापेक्षं महामतिम्।। 29।।
रामः सीतामुवाचेदं ब्रूहि तत्त्वं हनूमते। निष्कल्मषोऽयं ज्ञानस्य पात्रं नो नित्यभक्तिमान्।। 30।।

dṛṣṭvā tadā hanūmantaṃ prāñjaliṃ puratah sthitam /
kṛtakāryaṃ nirākāṅkṣaṃ jñānāpekṣaṃ mahāmatim //
rāmaḥ sītāmuvācedaṃ brūhi tattvaṃ hanūmate /
niṣkalmaṣo'yaṃ jñānasya pātraṃ no nityabhaktimān //

At that time, Hanuman—who had successfully finished all the jobs (services) assigned to him and did not want anything in return as a reward for his services, and who was wise and eager to learn (acquire, get acquainted with) Gyan (the knowledge of the supreme, absolute truth; the elementary truth or essence of existence; the knowledge that entitles the soul to achieve liberation and deliverance from the deluding world which traps ignorant creatures)—stood before him with palms joined together in submission (29). Seeing him, Sri Ram said to Sita, 'Oh Sita! This fellow Hanuman is greatly devoted and dedicated to both of us, he is without sins (i.e. he is pure, righteous and without any conceit or deceit in his mind) and is worthy to acquire the knowledge that is sublime, ethereal, divine, truthful, essential, supreme, transcendental and absolute, the knowledge which is called 'Gyan'. Therefore, you should teach him the elementary and essential truths about my true form and nature' (30).

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तथेति जानकी प्राह तत्त्वं रामस्य निश्चितम्। हनूमते प्रपन्नाय सीता लोकविमोहिनी।। 31।।
रामं विद्धि परं ब्रह्म सच्चिदानन्दमद्वयम्। सर्वोपाधिविनिर्मुक्तं सत्तामात्रमगोचरम्।। 32।।
आनन्दं निर्मलं शान्तं निर्विकारं निरञ्जनम्। सर्वव्यापिनमात्मानं स्वप्रकाशमकल्मषम्।। 33।।

tatheti jānakī prāha tattvaṃ rāmasya niścitam /
hanūmate prapannāya sītā lokavimohinī //
rāmaṃ viddhi paraṃ brahma saccidānandamadvayam /
sarvopādhivinirmuktaṃ sattāmātramagocaram //
ānandaṃ nirmalaṃ śāntaṃ nirvikāraṃ nirañjanam /
sarvavyāpinamātmānaṃ svaprakāśamakalmaṣam //

Then Sita, who is the daughter of Janak and who casts her deluding spell, called Maya, on the world, said 'alright' to Sri Ram and began to narrate the essence of 'Ram' (i.e. Sri Ram's essential, truthful, transcendental, eternal nature and form as being a manifestation or image of the macrocosmic supreme Soul of creation called Parmatma) to Hanuman who had sought their (Sri Ram's and Sita's) refuge in search of true knowledge (31). Sita said, 'Oh son Hanuman! You should recognise Sri Ram as the supreme Brahm who is the divine, sublime, real, truthful, matchless, peerless supreme Soul, and who is the treasury, an abode of eternal bliss, happiness, peace and tranquility. Without doubt he is free of, is beyond the scope of, limitations and constraints imposed by any or all honours or attributes associated with this mortal creation, is the only supreme and exclusive Authority, is not the subject matter of mind, intellect and sense organs (i.e. they cannot comprehend him), is a fount and treasury of bliss, joy, peace and tranquility, is most pure and holy, is calm, tranquil and peaceful, is without any faults, blemishes, negativity and reproof of any kind, is Niranjan (faultless, free from all delusions), is all-pervading and omnipresent, self-illuminated, and a Parmatma (i.e. the supreme Soul) who is without any sins, blemishes or evils (i.e. is without unrighteousness and impropriety of any kind) (32-33).

मां विद्धि मूलप्रकृतिं सर्गस्थित्यन्तकारिणीम्। तस्य सन्निधिमात्रेण सृजामीदमतन्द्रिता।। 34।।
तत्सान्निध्यान्मया सृष्टं तस्मिन्नारोप्यतेऽबुधैः। अयोध्यानगरे जन्म रघुवंशेऽतिनिर्मले।। 35।।
विश्वामित्रसहायत्वं मखसंरक्षणं ततः। अहल्याशापशमनं चापभङ्गो महेशितुः।। 36।।

māṃ viddhi mūlaprakṛtiṃ sargasthityantakāriṇīm /
tasya sannidhimātreṇa sṛjāmīdamatandritā //

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tatsānnidhyānmayā sṛṣṭaṃ tasminnāropyate'budhaiḥ /
ayodhyānagare janma raghuvaṁśe'tinirmale //
viśvāmitrasahāyatvaṃ makhasaṁrakṣaṇaṃ tataḥ /
ahalyāśāpaśamanaṃ cāpabhaṅgo maheśituḥ //

And you must recognise me (Sita) as the primary force, the essential cosmic creative energy of creation that is called 'Prakriti' or Nature which is behind creation, sustenance and annihilation of all that exists. Indeed, I create this deluding world in conjunction with 'him' (Lord Ram; here referring to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has manifested as Ram) without any let-up or indolence (i.e. I do it diligently, regularly and on a constant basis) (34). Inspite of it, the stupid and ignorant people charge him (i.e. allege him) of being the creator of this creation of mine which I have created myself by simply being near to him. So, his taking birth in Ayodhya in the most pure clan of Raghu (35), then helping sage Vishwamitra by protecting his fire sacrifice, liberating Ahilya from her curse and breaking the bow of Lord Shiva were all due to my influence or wish, i.e. he merely carried to the conclusion what I had planned in advance, and he accomplished these stupendous deeds because I had wanted him to do them (36).

मत्पाणिग्रहणं पश्चाद्भार्गवस्य मदक्ष्यः। अयोध्यानगरे वासो मया द्वादशवार्षिकः।। 37।।
दण्डकारण्यगमनं विराधवध एव च। मायामारीचमरणं मायासीताहृतिस्तथा।। 38।।
जटायुषो मोक्षलाभः कबन्धस्य तथैव च। शबर्याः पूजनं पश्चात्सुग्रीवेण समागमः।। 39।।

matpāṇigrahaṇaṃ paścādbhārgavasya madakṣayaḥ /
ayodhyānagare vāso mayā dvādaśavārṣikaḥ //
daṇḍakāraṇyagamanaṃ virādhavadha eva ca /
māyāmārīcamaraṇaṃ māyāsītāhṛtistathā //
jaṭāyuṣo mokṣalābhaḥ kabandhasya tathaiva ca /
śabaryāḥ pūjanaṃ paścātsugrīveṇa samāgamaḥ //

Thereafter, he married me, demolished the vanity and haughtiness of sage Parashuram, and stayed with me for twelve years in Ayodhya (37). Then he went to the Dandakarnya forest, slayed Viradh, killed Marich in the form of a decoy (golden) deer, and an un-real (illusionary image of the real) Sita was then abducted by Ravana (38). Then, Jatau (the vulture) and Kabandh (the demon) were liberated (from their sinful bodies), the Lord was worshipped by Shabari (the old tribal

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woman who was a great devotee of the Lord), and thereafter he befriended Sugriv (the king of monkeys) (39).

वालिनश्च वधः पश्चात्सीतान्वेषणमेव च। सेतुबन्धश्च जलधौ लङ्कायाश्च निरोधनम्।। 40।।
रावणस्य वधो युद्धे सपुत्रस्य दुरात्मनः। विभीषणे राज्यदानं पुष्पकेण मया सह।। 41।।
अयोध्यागमनं पश्चाद्राज्ये रामाभिषेचनम्। एवमादीनि कर्माणि मयैवाचरितान्यपि।
आरोपयन्ति रामेऽस्मिन्निर्विकारेऽखिलात्मनि।। 42।।

vālinaśca vadhaḥ paścātsītānveṣaṇameva ca /
setubandhaśca jaladhau laṅkāyāśca nirodhanam //
rāvaṇasya vadho yuddhe saputrasya durātmanaḥ /
vibhīṣaṇe rājyadānaṃ puṣpakeṇa mayā saha //
ayodhyāgamanaṃ paścādrājye rāmābhiṣecanam /
evamādīni karmāṇi mayaivācaritānyapi /
āropayanti rāme'sminnirvikāre'khilātmani //

Thereafter, Vaali was slayed, Sita was searched, a bridge was constructed over the ocean, and Lanka was besieged (40). Then he (Sri Ram) slayed the evil (demon king) Ravana along with his sons in the war, Vibhishan (his brother who had come to seek refuge with the Lord) was crowned on the throne of Lanka, and then Lord Ram returned by the Pushpak plane back to Ayodhya along with me (Sita) (41). He was then crowned on the throne of Ayodhya. Though all these events (verse 35-42) were brought about by me, the ignorant and foolish people allege or claim that they were done by Sri Ram who is, in fact, supreme Lord who is faultless and uninvolved in any thing that has occurred, and who is the supreme Soul that resides in all the creatures of the creation as their Atma, and therefore all are equal for him and he remains neutral, unattached, dispassionate, equanimous and equitable under all circumstances (42).

रामो न गच्छति न तिष्ठति नानुशोचत्याकाङ्क्षते त्यजति नो न करोति किञ्चित्।
आनन्दमूर्तिरचलः परिणामहीनो मायागुणाननुगतो हि तथा विभाति।।43।।

rāmo na gacchati na tiṣṭhati nānuśocatyākāṅkṣate tyajati no na karoti kiñcit /
ānandamūrtiracalaḥ pariṇāmahīno māyāguṇānanugato hi tathā vibhāti //

This 'Ram' (the supreme Soul or Atma) in fact does not walk, nor does he stop; he does not have the depressing feeling of remorse or becomes sorrowful; he does not have any desires or wants, nor does

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he renounces or abandons anything; he does no deeds or participates in any activity. He is an embodiment of bliss, peace and tranquility, is stable, unwavering and constant, and is a complete renunciate, having not even the least expectation of any rewards or results (simply because he is doing nothing). It is only due to the influence or effect of Maya (or effects) that he appears to be displaying the above features' (43).

ततो रामः स्वयं प्राह हनूमन्तमुपस्थितम्। शृणु तत्त्वं प्रवक्ष्यामि ह्यात्मानात्मपरात्मनाम्।। 44।।
आकाशस्य यथा भेदस्त्रिविधो दृश्यते महान्। जलाशये महाकाशस्तदवच्छिन्न एव हि।
प्रतिबिम्बाख्यमपरं दृश्यते त्रिविधं नभः।। 45।।

tato rāmaḥ svayaṃ prāha hanūmantamupasthitam/
śṛṇutattvaṃ pravakṣyāmi hyātmānātmaparātmanām//
ākāśasya yathā bhedastrividho dṛśyatemahān/
jalāśaye mahākāśastadavacchinna eva hi/
pratibimbākhyamaparaṃ dṛśyate trividhaṃ nabhaḥ//

After that, Sri Ram himself addressed Hanuman who was standing in front of him, 'I shall tell you the essential truth of the Atma (microcosmic soul of the individual creature, pure consciousness), Anatma (not related to the soul) and Parmatma (the supreme macrocosmic Soul of the creation, or cosmic pure consciousness which is the ultimate Truth and absolute Reality in creation). Listen carefully (44). In a body of water (e.g., a lake), three different aspects (types) of space (sky) are clearly evident (visible)—first is the Mahakash (the space which is all-pervading and omnipresent, which is present outside the water and whose reflection is seen in the water; the endless and vast sky seen above the surface of the earth and extending upto the bottomless end of the cosmos), the second is water specific sky (the sky or space that is limited to that particular body of water and its immediate environs), and the third is Pratibimba (the sky which is reflected from that water body's surface) (45).

बुद्ध्यवच्छिन्नचैतन्यमेकं पूर्णमथापरम्। आभासस्त्वपरं बिम्बभूतमेवं त्रिधा चितिः।। 46।।
साभासबुद्धेः कर्तृत्वमवच्छिन्नेऽविकारिणि। साक्षिण्यारोप्यते भ्रान्त्या जीवत्वं च तथाबुधैः।। 47।।

buddhyavacchinnacaitanyamekaṃ pūrṇamathāparam/
ābhāsastvaparaṃ bimbabhūtamevaṃ tridhā citiḥ//
sābhāsabuddheḥ kartṛtvamavacchinne'vikāriṇi/
sākṣiṇyāropyate bhrāntyā jīvatvaṃ ca tathābudhaiḥ//

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Similarly, 'Chetan' (consciousness; the conscious soul; the living aspect of creation; life itself; sentient; the animate being and the felling of life and perceptions) is also of three types—One that is inherent to the intellect and discriminatory faculty and limited to it (i.e. that principle that keeps the mind alive and active, lends it its magnificent powers and potentials, and empowering it to carry on with its stupendous activities; this is the micro Chetan). The second is that which is all-pervading and complete in all respects (i.e. is limitless and macro consciousness that lends a fraction of its measureless glories to the micro Chetan). The third is that which is reflected from the intellect and discrimination faculty of the creature and is called image or shadow 'Chetan' (i.e. the emotive mind and the discriminatory intellect are sometimes believed to have their own authority and powers, their own life and consciousness, their own abilities and energy which enables them to perform stupendous and most magnificent tasks independently, achieve fantastic things that are beyond imagination and comprehension). This is an illusion which is called 'shadow or reflection' of the truth (because the mind and intellect have no life of their own, they cannot do anything independent of the consciousness present in the creature that keeps it alive and makes it possible for the mind-intellect to display their profound potentials) (46). Out of the three, the mind and intellect are activated by the influence of the third type of 'Chetan' (i.e. by the illusion or shadow of the actual thing. This makes the mind imagine things that do not exist. That is why we 'imagine' by our mind, and though the intellect uses rational thinking to arrive at any conclusion, it still has to rely upon the mind because the latter is the one which receives inputs from the outside world and furnishes the intellect with its data bank on which it relies to take a decision. If the data is corrupted or 'imaginary', naturally the decision would be proportionately corrupted). But the foolish and ignorant ones think, out of their misconceptions, delusions and ignorance, that the uniform, faultless, eternally truthful Atma is both the doer as well as the enjoyer of the fruits or rewards of the deeds or actions. In fact, the supreme Atma is merely a neutral and dispassionate witness to all that the mind-intellect does in the world. The Atma is falsely accused of doing anything and then either enjoying or suffering its consequences. [Those who are ignorant of the facts think that the creature is doing this or

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that under the directions of its mind which is intelligent and wise. And since the creature has life because it has conscious Atma present in its bosom, they deduce that it is the Atma, in the form of the creature that does everything. When the creature enjoys any thing or suffers for anything, they think that the Atma is enjoying or suffering. Actually they are deluded and falsely.] (47).

[Note :—Please see Uttar Kand, Canto 5—Ram Gita for details. See also Kishkindha Kand, Canto 6, verse no. 72. in this context.]

आभासस्तु मृषा बुद्धिरविद्याकार्यमुच्यते। अवच्छिन्नं तु तद्ब्रह्म विच्छेदस्तु विकल्पतः।। 48।।
अवच्छिन्नस्य पूर्णेन एकत्वं प्रतिपाद्यते। तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यैश्च साभासस्याहमस्तथा।। 49।।

ābhāsastu mṛṣā buddhiravidyākāryamucyate/
avacchinnaṃ tu tadbrahma vicchedastu vikalpataḥ//
avacchinnasya pūrṇena ekatvaṃ pratipādyate/
tattvamasyādivākyaiśca sābhāsasyāhamastathā//

That which we call 'Jiva'—the living being, the soul, pure consciousness—has no shadow or reflected 'Chetan', because reflection or shadow is always illusionary and misleading. Ignorance leads one to think that he is wise, intelligent and knowing (i.e. the very notion that one thinks that one is learned and wise about the reality is deceptive and misleading, because then he would not have accused the Atma of doing deeds and enjoying its rewards). The supreme Soul is without a part (or it cannot be fractioned, divided or differentiated in two or more parts); hence to consider it as being more than one indivisible entity (a notion of duality) is erroneous and fallacious, and is also due to this ignorant intellectual exercise (48). This is the reason why the indivisible (microcosmic) soul of the individual creature, or the 'pure self', is regarded as being synonymous with, and one with, the universal cosmic (macrocosmic) 'Soul' because the latter cannot be fractioned and delineated into this and that. The former is addressed with qualifying adjectives used for the latter in order to establish uniformity or oneness between the two when the great sayings of the scriptures assert 'you art that' (49).

[Note :—See also Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse 40.]

ऐक्यज्ञानं यदोत्पन्नं महावाक्येन चात्मनोः। तदाविद्या स्वकार्यैश्च नश्यत्येव न संशयः।। 50।।
एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भक्तो मद्भावायोपपद्यते। मद्भक्तिविमुखानां हि शास्त्रगर्तेषु मुह्यताम्।
न ज्ञानं न च मोक्षः स्यात्तेषां जन्मशतैरपि।। 51।।

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इदं रहस्यं हृदयं ममात्मनो मयैव साक्षात्कथितं तवानघ।
मद्भक्तिहीनाय शठाय न त्वया दातव्यमैन्द्रादपि राज्यतोऽधिकम्।। 52।।

aikyajñānaṃ yadotpannaṃ mahāvākyena cātmanoḥ/
tadāvidyā svakāryaiśca naśyatyeva na saṁśayaḥ//
etadvijñāya madbhakto madbhāvāyopapadyate/
madbhaktivimukhānāṃ hi śāstragarteṣu muhyatām/
na jñānaṃ na ca mokṣaḥ syātteṣāṃ janmaśatairapi//
idaṃ rahasyaṃ hṛdayaṃ mamātmano mayaiva sākṣātkathitaṃ tavānagha/
madbhaktihīnāya śaṭhāya na tvayā dātavyamaindrādapi rājyato'dhikam//

When one acquires the awareness of the irrefutable, basic and elementary truth of oneness of the soul (of the living creature, the 'Jiva') and the supreme Soul (of the Parmatma) by understanding the implications of the great 'Mahavakyas' (the great truths enunciated by the Vedas), at that moment (i.e. in such an eventuality) ignorance, along with its deluding effects and incumbent actions, indeed become defunct (or destroyed)—there is no doubt about it (50). My devotee—having understood or realised the truth behind my essential divine, ethereal and supreme form, nature and being—becomes eligible to become one with me (i.e. attain that supreme state where the microcosmic soul merges with the macrocosmic supreme Soul). But those people who abandon my 'Bhakti' (devotion, worship, dedication, faith, surrender, refuge, shelter in me), and instead fall in the deep pit represented by pursuit of endless scriptural knowledge, do not get to know that 'truth' (i.e. they can never hope to acquire real and effective knowledge), nor are they able to have emancipation and salvation (51). Oh the faultless and sinless one ('Anagh'; here Hanuman is being referred to)! This top secret and sublime knowledge or mystery is like my 'heart', for I am nothing else but another form of (or synonymous with) the Atma or soul of the creature as well as the entire creation—what more, it is me myself who have told you all this. Even if you are enticed with the bait of getting wealth (reward) which is equal to or more than the kingdom of Indra (i.e. the kingdom of Gods), you must not tell this (i.e. the above secret or mystery) to a wicked, pervert and unscrupulous person who is not worthy to know it' (52).

[Note :—(1) Lord Ram has defined this knowledge as his 'heart' and himself as the 'soul or Atma' in this verse. Being the supreme Brahm personified, Ram is indeed the Atma of the creature; this Atma lives

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in the heart of a creature. Therefore, it is obvious that the Lord subtly lives in this knowledge which harbours the ultimate 'truth' in this creation. In other words, the soul of any body of knowledge is the truth hidden in it. (2) The four Mahavakyas or the great sayings of the Vedas are explained in detail in Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse 27 and its note B as well as Baal Kand, Canto 7, note to verse nos. 40-41.]

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

एतत्तेऽभिहितं देवि श्रीरामह्रदयं मया। अतिगुह्यतमं ह्रद्यं पवित्रं पापशोधनम्।। 53।।
साक्षाद्रामेण कथितं सर्ववेदान्तसंग्रहम्। यः पठेत्सततं भक्त्या स मुक्तो नात्र संशयः।। 54।।
ब्रह्महत्यादिपापानि बहुजन्मार्जितान्यपि। नश्यन्त्येव न सन्देहो रामस्य वचनं यथा।। 55।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

etatte'bhihitaṃ devi śrīrāmahṛdayaṃ mayā/
atiguhyatamaṃ hṛdyaṃ pavitraṃ pāpaśodhanam//
sākṣādrāmeṇa kathitaṃ sarvavedāntasaṅgraham/
yaḥ paṭhetsatataṃ bhaktyā sa mukto nātra saṁśayaḥ//
brahmahatyādipāpāni bahujanmārjitānyapi/
naśyantyeva na sandeho rāmasya vacanaṃ yathā//

Lord Shiva said, 'Oh Goddess (Parvati)! I have told you this so-called 'Ram Hriday' (literally, the heart or essence of what we know as 'Ram', the supreme Soul, the pure consciousness in the creation, the Lord Brahm) which is most secret or mysterious, one which conquers the heart, is most pure, divine and holy, and is an eliminator or destroyer of all sins (53). This is the essence (or the basic knowledge) of the entire gamut of Vedant (Upanishads) and its profound spiritual philosophy, and is expounded and enunciated by Lord Ram himself. Anyone who reads (and understands) it with devotion, conviction, faith and diligence is sure to attain liberation from the shackles tying him to this mundane, artificial and deluding world (54). By merely reading it (with understanding), many accumulated great sins of many previous births, such as harming learned Brahmins (and other creatures etc.) are surely destroyed—because this is what Sri Ram has said or declared himself (55).

योऽतिभ्रष्टोऽतिपापी परधनपरदारेषु नित्योद्यतो वा
स्तेयी ब्रह्मघ्नमातापितृवधनिरतो योगिवृन्दापकारी।
यः संपूज्याभिरामं पठति च ह्रदयं रामचन्द्रस्य भक्त्या
योगीन्द्रैरप्यलभ्यं पदमिह लभते सर्वदेवैः स पूज्यम्।।56।।

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yo'tibhraṣṭo'tipāpī paradhanaparadāreṣu nityodyato vā
steyī brahmaghnamātāpitṛvadhanirato yogivṛndāpakārī/
yaḥ saṃpūjyābhirāmaṃ paṭhati ca hṛdayaṃ rāmacandrasya bhaktyā
yogīndrairapyalabhyaṃ padamiha labhate sarvadevaiḥ sa pūjyam//

Those who are most corrupt, depraved, pervert and most sinful, are always yearning for and indulge in the wealth and women of others, are thieves and thugs, are killers of Brahmins, are planning the murder of their parents and harm the interest of Yogis (ascetics)—if anyone among such sinful and pervert persons sincerely worships Sri Rám and reads the holy verses of this 'Ram Hriday' with devotion, conviction, belief and faith, then he attains that supreme stature, or the designation called emancipation and salvation, which is worshipped, honoured and adored even by the Gods, and which state (or honour) is difficult even for the most exalted Yogis (ascetics) to attain or access (56).

* * *

Baal Kand — Canto 2

The tormented earth approaches Gods for liberation; the Lord's assurance

पार्वत्युवाच

धन्यास्म्यनुगृहीतास्मि कृतार्थास्मि जगत्प्रभो। विच्छिन्नो मेऽतिसन्देहग्रन्थिर्भवदनुग्रहात्।। 1।।
त्वन्मुखाद्गलितं रामतत्त्वामृतरसायनम्। पिबन्त्या मे मनो देव न तृप्यति भवापहम्।। 2।।
श्रीरामस्य कथा त्वत्तः श्रुता संक्षेपतो मया। इदानीं श्रोतुमिच्छामि विस्तरेण स्फुटाक्षरम्।। 3।।

pārvatyuvāca

dhanyāsmyanugṛhītāsmi kṛtārthāsmi jagatprabho/
vicchinno me'tisandehagranthirbhavadanugrahāt//
tvanmukhādgalitaṃ rāmatattvāmṛtarasāyanam/
pibantyā me mano deva na tṛpyati bhavāpaham//
śrīrāmasya kathā tvattaḥ śrutā saṅkṣepato mayā/
idānīṃ śrotumicchāmi vistareṇa sphuṭākṣaram//

Parvati said, 'Oh Lord of the world! By your kindness I feel greatly pleased and obliged, while the sac of my doubts and confusions has

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been punctured (destroyed) (1). Oh Lord! My mind and heart do not feel sufficiently contented by drinking the nectar-like divine words dripping (i.e. flowing or coming out) from your mouth describing the essence or elementary truth about Sri Ram, words which are the remover of all the fears of this deluding, illusionary, ensnaring and mundane existence (2). I have heard in brief the story of Sri Ram from your mouth. Now I want to hear it elaborately in detail' (3).

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

श्रृणु देवि प्रवक्ष्यामि गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं महत्। अध्यात्मरामचरितं रामेणोक्तं पुरा मम ॥4॥
तदद्य कथयिष्यामि श्रृणु तापत्रयापहम्। यच्छ्रुत्वा मुच्यते जन्तुरज्ञानोत्थमहाभयात्।
प्राप्नोति परमामृद्धिं दीर्घायुः पुत्रसन्ततिम्॥5॥

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śrīmahādeva uvāca

śṛṇu devi pravakṣyāmi guhyādguhyataraṃ mahat/
adhyātmarāmacaritaṃ rāmeṇoktaṃ purā mama//
tadadya kathayiṣyāmi śṛṇu tāpatrayāpaham/
yacchrutvā mucyate janturajñānotthamahābhayāt/
prāpnoti paramāmṛddhim dīrghāyuḥ putrasantatim//

Lord Shiva said, 'Oh Goddess! Listen, I shall tell you the most secret and mysterious story of 'Adhyatma Ramayan' which was earlier narrated to me by Sri Ram himself (4). Now I am beginning the narration of that Adhyatma Ramayan which is the remover (eliminator, vanquisher) of the three Traitaps. Listen carefully. By hearing it, the creature is liberated from the great fear induced by ignorance and delusions, and achieves great fame, renown, a long life, as well as is bestowed with sons and grandsons (i.e. happy household and family life) (5).

[Note—'Traitaps' are the fears or torments arising from the following— Adhi-bhautik—related to terrestrial creatures such as enemies and animals; Adhi-daivik—related to unfavourable Gods and malignant stars; Adhi-daihik—related to the body such as diseases and horrors of old age etc.]

भूमिर्भरिण भग्ना दशवदनमुखाशेषरक्षोगणानां
धृत्वा गोरूपमादौ दिविजमुनिजनैः साकमब्जासनस्य।
गत्वा लोकं रुदन्ती व्यसनमुपगतं ब्रह्मणे प्राह सर्वं
ब्रह्मा ध्यात्वा मुहूर्तं सकलमपि हृदावेदशेषात्मकत्वात्॥6॥

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bhūmirbhāreṇa bhagnā daśavadanamukhāśeṣarakṣoganānāṃ
dhṛtvā gorūpamādau divijamunijanaiḥ sākamabjāsanasya /
gatvā lokaṃ rūdantī vyasanamupagataṃ brahmaṇe prāha sarvaṃ
brahmā dhyātvā muhūrtaṃ sakalamapi hṛdāvedaśeṣātmakatvāt //

Once upon a time, mother earth, which was weary and tormented by the burden of Ravana and other demons, took the form of a cow and accompanied by Gods and sages went to the abode of Lord Brahma (the creator). There, she wept and narrated her tales of woes to Brahma. Then Brahma sat in meditation for one 'Muhurt' (i.e. a period of time equivalent to 1 hour and 48 minutes; literally meaning for a short while) and realised or knew by inspiration the way and means to end her consternations, torments and worries, because he is all knowing or omniscient (6).

तस्मात्क्षीरसमुद्रतीरमगमद् ब्रह्माथ देवैर्वृतो
देव्या चाखिललोकहृत्स्थमजरं सर्वज्ञमीशं हरिम्।
अस्तौषीच्छ्रुतिसिद्धनिर्मलपदैः स्तोत्रैः पुराणोद्भवै-
र्भक्त्या गद्गदया गिरातिविमलैरानन्दवाष्पैर्वृतः ।।7।।

tasmātkṣīrasamudratīramagamad brahmātha devairvṛto
devyā cākhilalokahṛtsthamajaraṃ sarvajñamīśaṃ harim /
astauṣīcchrutisiddhanirmalapadaiḥ stotraiḥ purāṇodbhavai-
rbhaktyā gadgadayā girātivimalairānandavāṣpairvṛtaḥ //

Thereafter, accompanied by all the Gods, Brahma took the earth with him and went to the shore of the 'ocean of milk' (Kshirsagar, the abode of Lord Vishnu). There he worshipped and praised Lord Hari—who pervades the whole world, is omnipresent, is all knowing, who does not get old and is free from all ailments and shortcomings associated with having a gross body, is omniscient and most wise—with a most pure, honest and humble mind using words which were most appropriate and had their sanction in the holy Vedas and other scriptures, and were like the Stotras or hymns sung in the various Purans in honour of the Lord. His eyes were filled with tears of pure joy and bliss; his body was delighted and thrilled (7).

ततः स्फुरत्सहस्त्रांशुसहस्त्रसदृशप्रभः। आविरासीद्धरिः प्राच्यां दिशां व्यपनयंस्तमः।।8।।
कथंचिददृष्टवान्ब्रह्मा दुर्दर्शमकृतात्मनाम्। इन्द्रनीलप्रतीकाशं स्मितास्यं पद्मलोचनम्।।9।।
किरीटहारकेयूरकुण्डलैः कटकादिभिः। विभ्राजमानं श्रीवत्सकौस्तुभप्रभयान्वितम्।।10।।

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tataḥ sphuratsahasrāṁśusahasrasadṛśaprabhaḥ /
āvirāsīddhariḥ prācyāṃ diśāṃ vyapanayaṁstamaḥ //
kathaṁciddṛṣṭvānbrahmā durdarśamakṛtātmanām /
indranīlapratīkāśaṃ smitāsyaṃ padmalocanam //
kirīṭahārakeyūrakuṇḍalaiḥ kaṭakādibhiḥ /
vibhrājamānaṃ śrīvatsakaustubhaprabhayānvitam //

Then Sri Hari (Vishnu)—who was as splendorous and radiant as thousands of luminescent suns—manifested himself (appeared) in the eastern horizon (direction), removing or dispelling the darkness of all the directions of the world in the process (8). Sri Hari, who is most difficult to behold by those who are sinners and who lack any goodness and auspiciousness (because of his immense holy and divine splendour, radiance and majesty even as the sun cannot be seen by the naked eyes), was seen by Brahma with the greatest of difficulties. [This does not imply that Brahma was sinful; it simply indicates the intensity of the Lord's radiance and glorious splendour. The emphasis here is that if Brahma, the creator, had so much difficulty in seeing the Lord, one can imagine how difficult it may be for ordinary creatures to behold him.] His glowing, radiant complexion was dark like the sapphire worn by (or possessed by) Indra (the king of Gods). His face had a sweet, enchanting and pleasant smile, and his eyes were large and attractive like a lotus (9). He was adorned by a crown, a tiara, beautiful necklaces and garlands, armlets and bracelets, ear-rings, large finger-rings and other such ornaments, as well as was endowed by the radiant glow effusing (emanating) from both the foot-prints of sage Bhrigu[1] as well as the 'Kaustav Mani' (a jewel worn by Lord Vishnu) on his chest (10).

[Note—[1]The footprints of sage Brighu are marked on the chest of Lord Vishnu when on some earlier occasion the sage had got annoyed with him and kicked him on the chest, and the Lord is so loving towards his devotees that, instead of getting angry at the sage's temerity and audaciousness, he had not only forgiven him but bore the footprint forever as a mark of respect for the sage, as a token of his repentance for all times to come, to show the world that even he is not beyond punishment, and he never minds being insulted if one is sincerely devoted to him and is righteous and virtuous. This mark is worn by Vishnu as his jewel permanently on his chest and is called 'Sri Vatsa'. Legend has it that this incident so much annoyed Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu, that she was provoked to curse the Brahmin clan

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as a whole that henceforth she, as the patron Goddess of wealth and prosperity, would shun them.]

स्तुवद्भिः सनकाद्यैश्च पार्षदैः परिवेष्टितम्। शङ्खचक्रगदापद्मवनमालाविराजितम्।। 11।।
स्वर्णयज्ञोपवीतेन स्वर्णवर्णाम्बरेण च। श्रिया भूम्या च सहितं गरुडोपरि संस्थितम्।। 12।।
हर्षगद्गदया वाचा स्तोतुं समुपचक्रमे।। 13।।

stuvadbhiḥ sanakādyaiśca pārṣadaiḥ pariveṣṭitam /
śaṅkhacakragadāpadmavanamālāvirājitam //
svarṇayajñopavītena svarṇavarṇāmbareṇa ca /
śriyā bhūmyā ca sahitaṃ garuḍopari saṁsthitam //
harṣagadgadayā vācā stotuṃ samupacakrame //

Sankadi and other sages were singing his eulogies and had surrounded him from all the sides. He (Lord Vishnu) was looking most glorious and auspicious with a conch, a discus, a mace and a lotus, one each in his four hands respectively, as well as with the garland of flowers around his neck (11). He was adorned by a golden sacred thread, and a Pitambar (a silken yellow body-wrapping seamless garment worn by Vishnu). He was accompanied by Laxmi (the Goddess of wealth and prosperity) and mother Earth. He was astride Garud (the legendary eagle, which is his mount). Seeing his stupendously beautiful image, Brahma began to sing his praises and glories with a throat chocked with extreme delight and overcome with emotions (12-13).

ब्रह्मोवाच

नतोऽस्मि ते पदं देव प्राणबुद्धीन्द्रियात्मभिः। यच्चिन्त्यते कर्मपाशाद्धृदि नित्यं मुमुक्षुभिः।। 14।।
मायया गुणमय्या त्वं सृजस्यवसि लुम्पसि। जगत्तेन न ते लेप आनन्दानुभवात्मनः।। 15।।
तथा शुद्धिर्न दुष्टानां दानाध्ययनकर्मभिः। शुद्धात्मता ते यशसि सदा भक्तिमतां यथा।। 16।।

brahmovāca

nato'smi te padaṃ deva prāṇabuddhīndriyātmabhiḥ /
yaccintyate karmapāśāddhṛdi nityaṃ mumukṣubhiḥ //
māyayā guṇamayyā tvaṃ sṛjasyavasi lumpasi /
jagattena na te lepa ānandānubhavātmanaḥ //
tathā śuddhirna duṣṭānāṃ dānādhyayanakarmabhiḥ /
śuddhātmatā te yaśasi sadā bhaktimatāṃ yathā //

Brahma said, 'Oh Lord! I bow my head at your holy feet which are

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remembered and concentrated upon regularly by the seekers of emancipation and salvation who wish to free themselves from the shackles of their deeds, both past and present, and which they do sincerely with their whole being (literally by their Pran), their intellect and mind, their heart and sense organs involved in it (14). You create, sustain and annihilate this world through the medium of your stupendous and magnificent power called 'Maya' endowed (i.e. empowered) with the three Gunas (specialties, qualities—Satvic, Rajsic and Tamsic)—but, being an embodiment of supreme bliss and contentment, you do not get attached to, involved in, effected by or engrossed in this Maya or the fantastically astounding creation that this maverick Maya conjures up (15).

Oh Lord! The purity of heart and the inner self that is achieved by the devotees who are devoted and dedicated to you and have constant and unwavering love (respect) for your pure and holy fame and divine glories, are not achieved (or received) by those persons who are darkened in their heart, are pervert, wicked and of a malignant inner-self which is tarnished and evil, inspite of their doing charities, studying the scriptures and doing other auspicious and noble deeds (16).

अतस्तवाङ्घ्रिमें दृष्टश्चित्तदोषापनुत्तये। सद्योऽन्तर्हृदये नित्यं मुनिभिः सात्वतैर्वृतः।। 17।।
ब्रह्माद्यैः स्वार्थसिद्ध्यर्थमस्माभिः पूर्वसेवितः। अपरोक्षानुभूत्यर्थं ज्ञानिभिर्हृदि भावितः।। 18।।

atastavāṅghrirme dṛṣṭaścittadoṣāpanuttaye/
sadyo'ntarhṛdaye nityaṃ munibhiḥ sātvatairvṛtaḥ//
brahmādyaiḥ svārthasiddhyarthamasmābhiḥ pūrvasevitaḥ/
aparokṣānubhūtyarthaṃ jñānibhirhṛdi bhāvitaḥ//

Hence, those lotus-like feet of yours which are regularly concentrated upon and remembered by devoted sages and seers in their hearts—I have had a divine view (Darshan) of them so as to enable me to destroy the faults and malignant tendencies of my own heart and my inner-self instantaneously (17). Earlier too, we Brahma and other Gods had served these lotus-like holy and divine feet of yours in order to serve our self interests, while wise sages and hermits had constantly concentrated upon them in their hearts with the avowed aim of experiencing you and witnessing you first hand (18).

तवाङ्घ्रिपूजानिर्माल्यतुलसीमालया विभो। स्पर्धते वक्षसि पदं लब्ध्वापि श्रीःसपत्निवत्।। 19।।

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अतस्त्वत्पादभक्तेषु तव भक्तिः श्रियोऽधिका। भक्तिमेवाभिवाञ्छन्ति त्वद्भक्ताः सारवेदिनः।।20।।
अतस्त्वत्पादकमले भक्तिरेव सदास्तु मे। संसारामयतप्तानां भेषजं भक्तिरेव ते।।21।।

tavāṅghripūjānirmālyatulasīmālayā vibho/
spardhate vakṣasi padaṃ labdhvāpi śrīḥ sapatnivat//
atastvatpādabhakteṣu tava bhaktiḥ śriyo'dhikā/
bhaktimevābhivāñchanti tvadbhaktāḥ sāravedinaḥ//
atastvatpādakamale bhaktireva sadāstu me/
saṁsāramayataptānāṃ bheṣajaṃ bhaktireva te//

Oh Vibho (omnipresent, all-pervading, all-powerful, infinite, magnanimous, glorious) Lord! Though Goddess Laxmi (Lord's divine consort) has found a place in your heart, she feels jealous and envious of a garland of Tulsi leaves which is offered at your feet at the time of your worship, as if the latter was her coparcener or competitor or a co-wife (19). You have greater affection for the devotees who have devotion and respect towards your lotus-like feet than you have for Laxmi. That is why those devotees who have realised your essence and true nature have a desire (or ask) for your Bhakti (pure devotion, dedication, worship, affection, surrender and refuge with you, your blessings etc.) to the exclusion of all other boons (20).

Therefore, Oh Lord, let me have eternal, steady and unwavering devotion and dedication in your lotus-like holy feet, because for those diseased persons afflicted by the disease of this mundane existence (such as spiritual, moral, physical, ethical and attitudinal depravation and degeneration, corrupted wisdom, thoughts and intellect, perverse and pervert mind etc.), your devotion and worship is the only remedy' (21).

इति ब्रुवन्तं ब्रह्माणं बभाषे भगवान् हरिः। किं करोमीति तं वेधाः प्रत्युवाचातिहर्षितः।।22।।
भगवन् रावणो नाम पौलस्त्यतनयो महान्। राक्षसानामधिपतिर्मद्दत्तवरदर्पितः।।23।।
त्रिलोकीं लोकपालांश्च बाधते विश्वबाधकः। मानुषेण मृतिस्तस्य मया कल्याण कल्पिता।
अतस्त्वं मानुषो भूत्वा जहि देवरिपुं प्रभो।।24।।

iti bruvantaṃ brahmāṇaṃ babhāṣe bhagavān hariḥ/
kiṃ karomīti taṃ vedhāḥ pratyuvācātiharṣitaḥ//
bhagavan rāvaṇo nāma paulastyatanayo mahān/
rākṣasānāmadhipatirmaddattavaradarpitaḥ //

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trilokīṃ lokapālāṁśca bādhate viśvabādhakaḥ/
mānuṣeṇa mṛtistasya mayā kalyāṇa kalpitā/
atastvaṃ mānuṣo bhūtvā jahi devaripuṃ prabho//

Brahma, who had been singing the glories and praises of Lord Hari as above, was asked by him—'What shall I do for you?' Then Brahma replied to him most delightedly (22)—'Oh God! Ravana, the grandson of Pulastya and son of Visrawa, is the king of demons. On the strength of my blessings (or boons), he has become extremely haughty and arrogant (as well as tyrannical and invincible) (23). He has created innumerable hurdles (problems of existence) for the whole universe, and has tormented endlessly the three Lokas (terrestrial, subterranean and celestial worlds) and the three Lokpals (patron Gods of these three worlds). Oh an embodiment of welfares, well-beings and all auspiciousness! I have destined (determined) his (Ravana's) death in the hands of a human. Therefore, Oh Lord, you should assume a human form and slay that enemy of Gods' (24).

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कश्यपस्य वरो दत्तस्तपसा तोषितेन मे।।25।।
याचितः पुत्रभावाय तथेत्यङ्गीकृतं मया। स इदानीं दशरथो भूत्वा तिष्ठति भूतले।।26।।

śrībhagavānuvāca

kaśyapasya varo dattastapasā toṣitena me//
yācitaḥ putrabhāvāya tathetyaṅgīkṛtaṃ mayā/
sa idānīṃ daśaratho bhūtvā tiṣṭhati bhūtale//

The Lord God (Vishnu) said, 'Being pleased by the hard (severe) austerities and penances (Tapa) done by Kashyap, I had given him a boon. He had desired me to manifest myself as his son; then I had said 'alright' and had accepted his proposal. Presently, he is present in the form of king Dashrath on this earth (in the city of Ayodhya) (25-26).

तस्याहं पुत्रतामेत्य कौसल्यायां शुभे दिने। चतुर्धात्मानमेवाहं सृजामीतरयोः पृथक्।।27।।
योगमायापि सीतेति जनकस्य गृहे तदा। उत्पत्स्यते तया सार्धं सर्वं सम्पादयाम्यहम्।
इत्युक्त्वान्तर्दधे विष्णुर्ब्रह्मा देवानथाब्रवीत्।।28।।

tasyāhaṃ putratāmetya kausalyāyāṃ śubhe dine/
caturdhātmānamevāhaṃ sṛjāmītarayoḥ pṛthak//
yogamāyāpi sīteti janakasya gṛhe tadā/
utpatsyate tayā sārdhaṃ sarvaṃ sampādayāmyaham/
ityuktvāntardadhe viṣṇurbrahmā devānathābravīt//

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I shall manifest myself (i.e. be born) in his household in 4 distinct forms as his four sons, in an auspicious and proper time, from the womb of Kaushalya and other two mothers (27). At the same time, my 'Yogmaya' (my delusion creating powers emanating from me) will take birth in the form of Sita in the household of king Janak. I shall take her with me and finish off all your desired works (or fulfill all your desires and meet all your needs)'. Saying this, Lord Vishnu vanished from sight. Thereafter, Brahma said to the other Gods (28)—

[Note—The word 'Yogmaya' has two parts, viz.-Yog and Maya. Yoga means meditation and contemplation, while Maya refers to the cosmic energy and delusions created by the Lord at the time of creation. 'Yog' also means union or conjunction or fusion of two entities. Therefore, Yogmaya refers to the fusion of the cosmic energy with the delusion-creating powers of the supreme Brahm when he did decide to start the process of creation. The illusion created by him removed the distinction between the truth and falsehood so much so that both appeared the same and became interchangeable. That is why, what appears true on the surface is actually false, and vice versa. But to enable this to happen, Brahm had to meditate and focus his attention to ignite that inherent but latent energy that is an integral part of creation. In other words, he had to do Tapa, which is another form of Yoga. The resultant stupendous forces of Nature that were unleashed by Brahm's meditation led to the chain of events that culminated in the revelation of the cosmos as it is known today. This magnificent event or the primary force that set this chain in motion has been conceptualized by the Purans as a deity known as 'Yogmaya'; she has been depicted by them as the female counterpart of the maverick Lord of creation, who has been personified as the Viraat Purush. In the case of Lord Ram, who is that Viraat Purush also known as Vishnu, that Yogmaya is represented by Sita. The other connotation of 'union' implies that this Yogmaya establishes a link between the ignorant and deluded creature, and the unadulterated, supreme and ultimate Truth represented by the Lord. The word also refers to the magical and mystical powers displayed by mystics and ascetics, which they have acquired by the virtue of their meditation and contemplation. See also Ayodhya Kand, Canto 6, verse no.11-12 and its note.]

ब्रह्मोवाच

विष्णुर्मानुषरूपेण भविष्यति रघोः कुले।। 29।।

यूयं सृजध्वं सर्वेऽपि वानरेष्वंशसम्भवान्। विष्णोः सहायं कुरुत यावत्स्थास्यति भूतले।।30।।

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इति देवान्समादिश्य समाश्वास्य च मेदिनीम्। ययौ ब्रह्मा स्वभवनं विज्वरः सुखमास्थितः।।31।।

brahmovāca

viṣṇurmānuṣarūpeṇa bhaviṣyati raghoḥ kule//
yūyaṃ sṛjadhvaṃ sarve'pi vānareṣvaṁśasambhavān /
viṣṇoḥ sahāyaṃ kuruta yāvatsthāsyati bhūtale//
iti devānsamādiśya samāśvāsya ca medinīm /
yayau brahmā svabhavanaṃ vijvaraḥ sukhamāsthitaḥ //

Brahma advised the Gods— 'Lord Vishnu shall manifest himself as a human in Raghu's clan. All of you should also reproduce yourselves as sons in the form of monkeys (in the monkey race), and till the time Vishnu remains on the earth, you should continue to serve him' (29-30). Having thus ordered (advised) the Gods and consoling the earth, Brahma went back to his own abode and lived happily without any further worries (31).

देवाश्च सर्वे हरिरूपधारिणः स्थिताः सहायार्थमितस्ततो हरेः।
महाबलाः पर्वतवृक्षयोधिनः प्रतीक्षमाणा भगवन्तमीश्वरम्।। 32।।

devāśca sarve harirūpadhāriṇaḥ sthitāḥ sahāyārthamitastato hareḥ /
mahābalāḥ parvatavṛkṣayodhinaḥ pratīkṣamāṇā bhagavantamīśvaram //

Meanwhile, all the Gods assumed the form of most valorous and strong monkeys who were adept at warfare and proficient in fighting, using mountains (i.e. large boulders, rocks) and trees as their arsenal. They lived and roamed about here and there on this earth, waiting for the time when they would be needed to help and serve the Lord God (32).

***

Baal Kand — Canto 3

Sri Ram's birth and childhood

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

अथ राजा दशरथः श्रीमान्सत्यपरायणः। अयोध्याधिपतिर्वीरः सर्वलोकेषु विश्रुतः।। 1।।
सोऽनपत्यत्वदुःखेन पीडितो गुरुमेकदा। वसिष्ठं स्वकुलाचार्यमभिवाद्येदमब्रवीत्।। 2।।
स्वामिन्पुत्राः कथं मे स्युः सर्वलक्षणलक्षिताः। पुत्रहीनस्य मे राज्यं सर्वं दुःखाय कल्पते।। 3।।

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śrīmahādeva uvāca

atha rājā daśarathaḥ śrīmānsatyaparāyaṇaḥ /
ayodhyādhipatirvīraḥ sarvalokeṣu viśrutaḥ //
so'napatyatvaduḥkhena pīḍito gurumekadā /
vasiṣṭhaṃ svakulācāryamabhivādyedamabravīt //
svāminputrāḥ kathaṃ me syuḥ sarvalakṣaṇalakṣitaḥ /
putrahīnasya me rājyaṃ sarvaṃ duḥkhāya kalpate //

Lord Shiva resumed his narration—'Once, king Dashrath, who was world-famed Lord of Ayodhya and renowned for his truthfulness and bravery, felt very remorseful and sad (or regretted) that he had no sons (heirs). So he called his clan's moral preceptor Guru Vashistha, bowed his head to him and said (1-2), 'Oh Lord! Please tell me by which method (or by doing what) can I get sons who have all the auspicious and noble virtues in them? Because without sons, this kingdom appears sorrowful and tormenting for me (for there is no heir to look after it after my death)' (3).

ततोऽब्रवीद्वसिष्ठस्तं भविष्यन्ति सुतास्तव। चत्वारः सत्त्वसम्पन्ना लोकपाला इवापराः॥ 4॥
शान्ताभर्तारमानीय ऋष्यशृङ्गं तपोधनम्। अस्माभिः सहितः पुत्रकामेष्टिं शीघ्रमाचर॥ 5॥

tato'bravīdvasiṣṭhastaṃ bhaviṣyanti sutāstava /
catvāraḥ sattvasampannā lokapālā ivāparāḥ //
śāntābhartāramānīya ṛṣyaśṛṅgaṃ tapodhanam /
asmābhiḥ sahitaḥ putrakāmeṣṭiṃ śīghramācara //

Then Guru Vashistha said to king Dashrath, 'You shall be blessed by four sons who would be most able and potent like the four Lokpals personified themselves (4). You should soon invite Shanta's husband Sringi Rishi, and together with me, you should perform the 'son-begetting' fire sacrifice' (5).

तथेति मुनिमानीय मन्त्रिभिः सहितः शुचिः। यज्ञकर्म समारेभे मुनिभिर्वीतकल्मषैः॥ 6॥
श्रद्धया हूयमानेऽग्नौ तप्तजाम्बूनदप्रभः। पायसं स्वर्णपात्रस्थं गृहीत्वोवाच हव्यवाट्॥ 7॥
गृहाण पायसं दिव्यं पुत्रीयं देवनिर्मितम्। लप्स्यसे परमात्मानं पुत्रत्वेन न संशयः॥ 8॥

tatheti munimānīya mantribhiḥ sahitaḥ śuciḥ /
yajñakarma samārebhe munibhirvītakalmaṣaiḥ //
śraddhayā hūyamāne'gnau taptajāmbūnadaprabhaḥ /
pāyasaṃ svarṇapātrasthaṃ gṛhītvovāca havyavāṭ //
gṛhāṇa pāyasaṃ divyaṃ putrīyaṃ devanirmitam/
lapsyase paramātmānaṃ putratvena na saṁśayaḥ //

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The king said 'alright' and invited sage Sringi. Then he purified himself (by bathing, fasting etc.), and accompanied by his ministers, he started the special-purpose sacrifice with the help of holy and noble sages and seers (6). At the time when holy offerings (oblations) were being offered to the religious fire with due reverence and honour during the sacrificial ritual, the Fire God, who was radiant like molten gold, appeared (from the fire pit) with rice pudding in a golden vessel in his hands, and said (7), 'Oh king! Take this holy and marvelous pudding made by Gods, and which has the mystical potent of (or which is empowered with) providing (bestowing) sons. With the help of this you can, without doubt, beget the supreme Lord in the form of your sons' (8).

इत्युक्त्वा पायसं दत्त्वा राज्ञे सोऽन्तर्दधेऽनलः। ववन्दे मुनिशार्दूलौ राजा लब्धमनोरथः।। 9।।
वसिष्ठऋष्यशृङ्गाभ्यामनुज्ञातो ददौ हविः। कौसल्यायै सकैकेय्यै अर्धमर्धं प्रयत्नतः।। 10।।

ityuktvā pāyasaṃ dattvā rājñe so'ntardadhe'nalaḥ /
vavande muniśārdūlau rājā labdhamanorathaḥ //
vasiṣṭharṣyaśṛṅgābhyāmanujñāto dadau haviḥ /
kausalyāyai sakaikeyyai ardhamardhaṃ prayatnataḥ //

Having advised thus and giving the pudding to the king, the Fire God disappeared from the site. Thereafter, the king felt extremely exhilarated, contented and fulfilled in his endeavour, worshipped the feet of his Guru Vashistha and the guest sage Sringi, both of whom were like lions (best and superior) amongst their peers, and on their orders, he distributed the pudding equally with great care between his queens Kaushalya and Kaikeyi (9-10).

ततः सुमित्रा संप्राप्ता जगृघ्नुः पौत्रिकं चरुम्। कौसल्या तु स्वभागार्धं ददौ तस्यै मुदान्विता।। 11।।
कैकेयी च स्वभागार्धं ददौ प्रीतिसमन्विता। उपभुज्य चरुं सर्वाः स्त्रियो गर्भसमन्विताः।। 12।।

tataḥ sumitrā saṁprāptā jagṛghnuḥ pautrikaṃ carum/
kausalyā tu svabhāgārdhaṃ dadau tasyai mudānvitā //
kaikeyī ca svabhāgārdhaṃ dadau prītisamanvitaḥ /
upabhujya caruṃ sarvāḥ striyo garbhasamanvitaḥ //

Then queen Sumitra also reached there desiring to have a share in the son-bestowing divine pudding. At this, Kaushalya gladly gave her half of her own share (11) and Kaikeyi too did the same from her share. In this manner, all the queens conceived (12).

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देवता इव रेजुस्ताः स्वभासा राजमन्दिरे। दशमे मासि कौसल्या सुषुवे पुत्रमद्भुतम्।। 13।।
मधुमासे सिते पक्षे नवम्यां कर्कटे शुभे। पुनर्वस्वृक्षसहिते उच्चस्थे ग्रहपञ्चके।। 14।।
मेषं पूषणि संप्राप्ते पुष्पवृष्टिसमाकुले। आविरासीज्जगन्नाथः परमात्मा सनातनः।। 15।।

devatā iva rejustāḥ svabhāsā rājamandire/
daśame māsi kausalyā suṣuve putramadbhutam//
madhumāse site pakṣe navamyāṃ karkaṭe śubhe/
punarvasvṛkṣasahite uccasthe grahapañcake//
meṣaṃ pūṣaṇi saṃprāpte puṣpavṛṣṭisamākule/
āvirāsījjagannāthaḥ paramātmā sanātanaḥ//

Those three queens began to look as magnificent as Goddesses due to their glowing radiance in that royal palace. Then, in the tenth month, Kaushalya gave birth to a most magnificent, majestic and mysterious son (13). In the month of Chaitra (roughly March-April), during the 9th day of the waxing phase of the moon, in the zodiac sign of Cancer and in the constellation of stars called Punarvasu, when the five planets were ascendant and the sun was in the zodiac sign of Aries, then (during the noon of that particular day) the eternal, absolute, formless and attributeless supreme Lord, who is the Lord of the universe, made his appearance. At that time the sky was obscured and covered by a hail of vibrantly colourful, very resplendent, fully blooming and sweetly fragrant flowers that rained down on earth (14-15).

नीलोत्पलदलश्यामः पीतवासाश्चतुर्भुजः। जलजारुणनेत्रान्तः स्फुरत्कुण्डलमण्डितः।। 16।।
सहस्रार्कप्रतीकाशः किरीटी कुञ्चितालकः। शङ्खचक्रगदापद्मवनमालाविराजितः।।17।।
अनुग्रहाख्यहृत्स्थेन्दुसूचकस्मितचन्द्रिकः। करुणारससम्पूर्णविशालोत्पललोचनः।
श्रीवत्सहारकेयूरनूपुरादिविभूषणः।। 18।।

nīlotpaladalaśyāmaḥ pītavāsāścaturbhujaḥ/
jalajāruṇanetrāntaḥ sphuratkuṇḍalamaṇḍitaḥ//
sahasrārkapratīkāśaḥ kirīṭī kuñcitālakaḥ/
śaṅkhacakragadāpadmavanamālāvirājitaḥ //
anugrahākhyahṛtsthendusūcakasmitacandrikaḥ /
karuṇārasasampūrṇaviśālotpalalocanaḥ /
śrīvatsahārakeyūranūpurādivibhūṣaṇaḥ //

[The following verses describe the bewitching beauty of the Lord who assumed the form of a child called Ram.] He was dark

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complexioned like a blue-lotus, wore a Pitambar (a yellow silken seamless body-wrapping cloth worn by Vishnu) and had four arms. His eyes looked adorable and magnificent like a red-lotus, while the ears were adorned with bright ear-rings (16). His radiant glow was like thousands of splendorous, luminescent suns. There was a radiant and magnificent crown and an enchanting lock of curled hairs on his head, while each of his four hands had a conch, a discus, a mace and a lotus respectively in them. A garland having five colours (i.e. different varieties of flowers) adorned his neck (17). The sweet, bewitching and enigmatic smile on his lotus-like face resembled the pleasant moonlight emanating and spreading in all the directions from the symbolic moon residing in his heart. [That is, the sweetness of his heart was spilling over in the form of his smile.] His merciful and compassionate eyes were as large as the moon, and he was adorned by ornaments such as the footprint of sage Brighu (called Sri Vatsa), and a garland (on his chest). He also wore armlets and bracelets as well as anklets on his body (18).

दृष्ट्वा तं परमात्मानं कौसल्या विस्मयाकुला। हर्षाश्रुपूर्णनयना नत्वा प्राञ्जलिरब्रवीत्।। 19।।

dṛṣṭvā taṃ paramātmānaṃ kausalyā vismayākulā /
harṣāśrupūrṇanayanā natvā prāñjalirabravīt //

Seeing such a stupendously beautiful and the magnificent supreme Lord manifest himself as her son, Kaushalya was amazed and dumbfounded; her eyes were filled with tears of joy, and folding her hands in prayerful submission, she said (19)—

कौसल्योवाच

देवदेव नमस्तेऽस्तु शङ्खचक्रगदाधर। परमात्माच्युतोऽनन्तः पूर्णस्त्वं पुरुषोत्तमः।।20।।
वदन्त्यगोचरं वाचां बुद्ध्यादीनामतीन्द्रियम्। त्वां वेदवादिनः सत्तामात्रं ज्ञानैकविग्रहम्।।21।।

kausalyovāca

devadeva namaste'stu śaṅkhacakragadādhara /
paramātmācyuto'nantaḥ pūrṇastvaṃ puruṣottamaḥ //
vadantyagocaraṃ vācāṃ buddhyādīnāmatīndriyam /
tvāṃ vedavādinaḥ sattāmātraṃ jñānaikavigraham //

Kaushalya said, 'Oh Lord of lords (or the God of gods)! I pay my respects and obeisance to you. Oh the bearer of conch, discus and

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mace! You are an exalted, immaculate, eternal, imperishable, endless, supreme Soul called Parmatma, and you are a perfectly complete Purushottam (i.e. the best and the most exalted soul in creation who has no shortcomings and faults so very characteristic of other creatures) (20). Those who are experts and most proficient in the Vedas say that you are not the subject matter for comprehension, debates and discussions by the mind, intellect and speech. You are beyond the grasp and reach of the sense organs, are the only powerful authority in creation, and the only one who is a complete embodiment and personification of 'Gyan' (true wisdom and knowledge; erudition, enlightenment and realisation of the essential and absolute Truth in creation; awareness and realisation of whatever there is to be known) (21).

त्वमेव मायया विश्वं सृजस्यवसि हंसि च। सत्त्वादिगुणसंयुक्तस्तुर्य एवामलः सदा।। 22।।
करोषीव न कर्ता त्वं गच्छसीव न गच्छसि। शृणोषि न शृणोषीव पश्यसीव न पश्यसि।। 23।।

tvameva māyayā viśvaṃ sṛjasyavasi haṁsi ca /
sattvādiguṇasaṁyuktasturya evāmalaḥ sadā //
karoṣīva na kartā tvaṃ gacchasīva na gacchasi /
śṛṇoṣi na śṛṇoṣīva paśyasīva na paśyasi //

You create, sustain and annihilate this universe by using your Maya (deluding, creative as well as destructive cosmic powers) which is empowered with the three Gunas (qualities) of Satva, Raj and Tam , although you always remain in a uniform state of 'Turiya'. (22). You are not the 'doer' of deeds though you appear to be so; you do not walk though you seem to be moving; you do not listen but appear to be doing so , and you do not see inspite of the illusion that you are (23).

[Note—(1) The concept of Maya is closely linked with the inherent qualities present in the creation and its creatures that determine their behaviours and thoughts. Maya has been defined and elaborately described in Aranyakand, canto 3, verse nos.20-39, and canto 4, verse nos.21-47. (2) The three Gunas are Satva—noble qualities, virtues and characters, righteousness etc.; Raj—which produces worldly desires, passions, vices etc.; Tam—base, mean, lowly qualities, ignorance, delusions, darkness, perversions etc. (3) The 'Turiya state' is the 4th state of consciousness symbolising supreme bliss, peace and tranquility. Here it means that though the Lord appears to be involved

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in all the maneuvers and stratagem associated with the multifarious activities pertaining to creation, he actually is totally dispassionate and dissociated with it—not at all affected by or concerned with it. A separate appendix no.2 also elaborately details these concepts along with many other relevant topics.]

अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुद्ध इत्यादि श्रुतिरब्रवीत्। समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्नपि न लक्ष्यसे।। 24।।
अज्ञानध्वान्तचित्तानां व्यक्त एव सुमेधसाम्। जठरे तव दृश्यन्ते ब्रह्माण्डाः परमाणवः।।25।।
त्वं ममोदरसम्भूत इति लोकान्विडम्बसे। भक्तेषु पारवश्यं ते दृष्टं मेऽद्य रघूत्तम।। 26।।

apramāṇo hyamanāḥ śuddha ityādi śrutirabravīt /
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhannapi na lakṣyase //
ajñānadhvāntacittānāṃ vyakta eva sumedhasām/
jaṭhare tava dṛśyante brahmāṇḍāḥ paramāṇavaḥ //
tvaṃ mamodarasambhūta iti lokānviḍambase /
bhakteṣu pāravaśyaṃ te dṛṣṭaṃ me'dya raghūttama //

Even the Vedas assert that you are the pure consciousness that does not require the subtle or gross body represented by the mind-intellect complex and the Pran, the latter being the vital life-giving wind symbolising the gross body of a creature, respectively. You live uniformly in all the creatures as their soul or Atma though you are not visible (perceived, experienced, realised) by those whose inner-self (i.e. mind, intellect, heart) is covered by a dark sheath of ignorance. You are recognised, perceived, experienced by those persons only who are wise and enlightened. Oh Lord! Numerous universes appear miniscule like atoms in your stomach (i.e. inside you, because you are the all-encompassing Lord whose each pore represents one or the other universe; because there is nothing in existence that is outside of you; because you are like the sponge which soaks water and then both become one, with each pore of the former filled with the latter, and the latter leaves no pore untouched), but your benevolent grace and munificence towards your devotees is evident from the fact that you, inspite of being of such profound glories and possessing such stupendous powers, having such sterling virtues, such grandeur, such majesty and immeasurable dimensions, give credit to me by giving you birth from my womb and thereby becoming your mother (24-26).

संसारसागरे मग्ना पतिपुत्रधनादिषु। भ्रमामि मायया तेऽद्य पादमूलमुपागता।। 27।।
देव त्वद्रूपमेतन्मे सदा तिष्ठतु मानसे। आवृणोतु न मां माया तव विश्वविमोहिनी।। 28।।

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उपसंहर विश्वात्मन्नदो रूपमलौकिकम्। दर्शयस्व महानन्दबालभावं सुकोमलम्।
ललितालिङ्गनालापैस्तरिष्याम्युत्कटं तमः।। 29।।

saṁsārasāgare magnā patiputradhanādiṣu /
bhramāmi māyayā te'dya pādamūlamupāgatā //
deva tvadrūpametanme sadā tiṣṭhatu mānase /
āvṛṇotu na māṃ māyā tava viśvavimohinī //
upasaṁhara viśvātmannado rūpamalaukikam/
darśayasva mahānandabālabhāvaṃ sukomalam /
lalitāliṅganālāpaistariṣyāmyutkaṭaṃ tamaḥ //

Being under the sway of your delusion creating powers, I was submerged and drowned in the deceptive, entrapping and mundane ocean-like world consisting of illusionary (but appearing to be real) relations such as that of a husband, a son and of wealth (i.e. my household). But today I feel privileged, honoured and fortunate that I have come to take shelter in your lotus-like holy and divine feet (27).

Oh Lord! Let your stupendously beautiful, most attractive, exceedingly charming and eternally captivating image always reside in my heart. Please bless me that your Maya (delusion creating powers), which shackles this whole world, does not affect or influence me in any way (28).

Oh the soul of the universe! Please bring to an end this supernatural (out-worldly, strange, mysterious) image of yours, and instead assume the pleasant, joy-giving form of a child, by whose happy and cheerful embrace and childish talks, I shall cross the dense and terrible forest of darkness induced by ignorance' (29).

श्रीभगवानुवाच

यद्यदिष्टं तवास्त्यम्ब तत्तद्भवतु नान्यथा।। 30।।
अहं तु ब्रह्मणा पूर्वं भूमेर्भारापनुत्तये। प्रार्थितो रावणं हन्तुं मानुषत्वमुपागतः।। 31।।

śrībhagavānuvāca

yadyadiṣṭhaṃ tavāstyamba tattadbhavatu nānyathā //
ahaṃ tu brahmaṇā pūrvaṃ bhūmerbhārāpanuttaye /
prārthito rāvaṇaṃ hantuṃ mānuṣatvamupāgataḥ //

The Lord said, 'Oh mother! Whatever you wish, so shall it be! Nothing should be against it (30). Earlier, Brahma had prayed to me

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to remove the burden of this earth. Hence, I have taken a human form (have incarnated myself) to slay the demon Ravana and others of his ilk (31).

त्वया दशरथेनाहं तपसाराधितः पुरा। मत्पुत्रत्वाभिकाङ्क्षिण्या तथा कृतमनिन्दिते।। 32।।
रूपमेतत्त्वया दृष्टं प्राक्तनं तपसः फलम्। मद्दर्शनं विमोक्षाय कल्पते ह्यन्यदुर्लभम्।। 33।।
संवादमावयोर्यस्तु पठेद्वा शृणुयादपि। स याति मम सारूप्यं मरणे मत्स्मृतिं लभेत्।। 34।।

tvayā daśarathenāhaṃ tapasārādhitaḥ purā /
matputratvābhikāṅkṣiṇyā tathā kṛtamanindite //
rūpametattvayā dṛṣṭaṃ prāktanaṃ tapasaḥ phalam/
maddarśanaṃ vimokṣāya kalpate hyanyadurlabham //
saṁvādamāvayoryastu paṭhedvā śṛṇuyādapi /
sa yāti mama sārūpyaṃ maraṇe matsmṛtiṃ labhet //

'Oh the blameless one! You too had worshipped me and had done severe penances and observed austerities along with Dashrath with a joint wish to have me as your son. I have fulfilled your wishes now by appearing as an incarnation in the form of your child (32). You have seen this majestic, magnificent, divine and radiant image of me due to the good effects (i.e. a reward or auspicious fruit) of those penances and austerities. My divine vision (Darshan) bestows emancipation and salvation; those who lack auspiciousness and goodness have the greatest of difficulties in having my divine sight (Darshan) (33). Those persons who read or listen to this conversation between us, shall attain oneness with me (i.e. get salvation of their souls by being one with the supreme Soul which I represent in human form), and they shall remember me at the time of death' (34).

इत्युक्त्वा मातरं रामो बालो भूत्वा रुरोद ह। बालत्वेऽपीन्द्रनीलाभो विशालाक्षोऽतिसुन्दरः।। 35।।
बालारुणप्रतीकाशो लालिताखिललोकपः। अथ राजा दशरथः श्रुत्वा पुत्रोद्भवोत्सवम्।
आनन्दार्णवमग्नोऽसावाययौ गुरुणा सह।। 36।।

ityuktvā mātaraṃ rāmo bālo bhūtvā ruroda ha /
bālatve'pīndranīlābho viśālākṣo'tisundaraḥ //
bālāruṇapratīkāśo lālitākhilalokapaḥ /
atha rājā daśarathaḥ śrutvā putrodbhavotsavam /
ānandārṇavamagno'sāvāyayau guruṇā saha //

Having said this, the Lord became (i.e. transformed himself into)

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a child and began to cry. His childish form was also dark complexioned like the 'Indra Neel Mani' (blue sapphire worn by Indra), had large eyes and was most beautiful, charming and captivating (35). It had the radiant and vibrant aura of a rising sun as seen in the morning sky over the horizon. The Lord provided immense joy and delight to all the Lokpals (custodians of the world) by manifesting himself as a most attractive child. Thereafter, when king Dashrath heard the good and welcome news about the ceremonial (auspicious) arrival of a son in his household, he appeared to be drowned in a surging ocean of delight, happiness and exhilaration. He went to the royal residence along with his Guru (Vashistha) (36).

रामं राजीवपत्राक्षं दृष्ट्वा हर्षाश्रुसंप्लुतः। गुरुणा जातकर्माणि कर्तव्यानि चकार सः।। 37।।
कैकेयी चाथ भरतमसूत कमलेक्षणा। सुमित्रायां यमौ जातौ पूर्णेन्दुसदृशाननौ।।38।।
तदा ग्रामसहस्त्राणि ब्राह्मणेभ्यो मुदा ददौ। सुवर्णानि च रत्नानि वासांसि सुरभीः शुभाः।।39।।

rāmaṃ rājīvapatrākṣaṃ dṛṣṭvā harṣāśrusaṁplutaḥ /
guruṇā jātakarmāṇi kartavyāni cakāra saḥ //
kaikeyī cātha bharatamasūta kamalekṣaṇā /
sumitrāyāṃ yayau jātau pūrṇendusadṛśānanau //
tadā grāmasahasrāṇi brāhmaṇebhyo mudā dadau /
suvarṇāni ca ratnāni vāsāṁsi surabhīḥ śubhāḥ //

Reaching inside the palace, he saw the lotus-eyed Sri Ram and was drenched with tears of immense joy and bliss. He got his Guru to perform the various rituals and sacraments associated with child birth (37). Thereafter, Bharat was born of the lotus-eyed Kaikeyi, while Sumitra gave birth to twins whose sweet faces resembled the full moon, and who were as beautiful as the Ashwini Kumars (38). At that time king Dashrath enthusiastically gave away hundreds of villages, a lot of gold, numerous gems, various types of robes of honour and garments, and countless cows with auspicious characters and signs to Brahmins as charity (39).

यस्मिन् रमन्ते मुनयो विद्ययाऽज्ञानविप्लवे। तं गुरुः प्राह रामेति रमणाद्राम इत्यपि।। 40।।
भरणाद्भरतो नाम लक्ष्मणं लक्षणान्वितम्। शत्रुघ्नं शत्रुहन्तारमेवं गुरुरभाषत।। 41।।

yasmin ramante munayo vidyayā'jñānaviplave /
taṃ guruḥ prāha rāmeti ramaṇādrāma ityapi //
bharaṇādbharato nāma lakṣmaṇaṃ lakṣaṇānvitam /
śatrughnaṃ śatruhantāramevaṃ gururabhāṣata //

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He—in whom the sages and seers dwell (i.e. constantly remember him or spend their time to contemplate and meditate upon him) after having destroyed their darkness of ignorance with the light of wisdom, enlightenment, self-realisation and knowledge of the ultimate and universal Truth that is the absolute Reality in this creation, and who attracts (charms, enraptures, enthralls) the intellect, heart and mind of his devotees by his stupendous charm and beauty—was named 'Ram' by his Guru (Vashistha) (40).

Similarly, the second son was named Bharat because he would be the nourisher, sustainer and caretaker of the whole world; the third son was named Laxman because he was endowed with all the virtues of goodness, character and auspiciousness, while the fourth son was called Shatrughan as he would be the vanquisher (conqueror, crusher) of all the enemies or opponents in this world (41).

लक्ष्मणो रामचन्द्रेण शत्रुघ्नो भरतेन च। द्वन्द्वीभूय चरन्तौ तौ पायसांशानुसारतः।।42।।
रामस्तु लक्ष्मणेनाथ विचरन्बाललीलया। रमयामास पितरौ चेष्टितैर्मुग्धभाषितैः।।43।।

lakṣmaṇo rāmacandreṇa śatrughno bharatena ca /
dvandvībhūya carantau tau pāyasāṁśānusārataḥ //
rāmastu lakṣmaṇenātha vicaranbālalīlayā /
ramayāmāsa pitarau ceṣṭitairmugdhabhāṣitaiḥ //

By virtue of the share given by Kaushalya and Kaikeyi from the rice pudding to Sumitra, Laxman followed Sri Ram and Shatrughan followed Bharat respectively (42). Roaming and frolicking around along with Laxman, Sri Ram gave immense joy to his parents by his childhood pranks, playful activities, mischievous efforts, innocent childish giggle, and talks with a lisp and babble (43).

भाले स्वर्णमयाश्वत्थपर्णमुक्ताफलप्रभम्। कण्ठे रत्नमणिव्रातमध्यद्वीपिनखाञ्चितम्।।44।।
कर्णयोः स्वर्णसम्पन्नरत्नार्जुनसटालुकम्। शिञ्जानमणिमञ्जीरकटिसूत्राङ्गदैर्वृतम्।।45।।

bhāle svarṇamayāśvatthaparṇamuktāphalaprabham /
kaṇṭhe ratnamaṇivrātamadhyadvīpinakhāñcitam //
karṇayoḥ svarṇasampannaratnārjunasaṭālukam/
śiñjānamaṇimañjīrakaṭisūtrāṅgadairvṛtam //

His (Sri Ram's) forehead was adorned by a radiantly bright, gold-encrusted leaf of the Pipal tree (sacred Fig tree-*ficus religiosa*) decorated by pearls, while the neck was adorned with fine necklaces consisting

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of intertwined strings decorated the gems and jewels and having lion's nails studded at intervals (44). Ornaments of gold studded with jewels, which resembled raw fruits of the Arjun tree (*Terminalia alatagabra*), were dangling from his ears, while gem-studded tinkling anklets, golden waist-band (girdle) and bracelets/armlets adorned his body (45).

स्मितवक्त्राल्पदशनमिन्द्रनीलमणिप्रभम्। अङ्गणे रिङ्गमाणं तं तर्णकाननु सर्वतः।। 46।।
दृष्ट्वा दशरथो राजा कौसल्या मुमुदे तदा। भोक्ष्यमाणो दशरथो राममेहीति चासकृत्।।47।।

smitavaktrālpadaśanamindranīlamaṇiprabham /
aṅgaṇe riṅgamāṇaṃ taṃ tarṇakānanu sarvataḥ //
dṛṣṭvā daśaratho rājā kausalyā mumude tadā /
bhokṣyamāṇo daśaratho rāmamehīti cāsakṛt //

King Dashrath and mother Kaushalya were greatly exhilarated and delighted on seeing the child, whose radiance was like the hue of the 'Indra Neel Mani' (blue sapphire worn by Indra), and whose face was adorned by a few-toothed smile, running around the palace courtyard behind a calf with a child-like staggering gait (slowly, tottering, falling, getting up, limping, jumping up and running behind the calf again). When the king set down for his meals, he most cheerfully and affectionately called Sri Ram, saying 'Ram, come here' (46-47).

आह्वयत्यतिहर्षेण प्रेम्णा नायाति लीलया। आनयेति च कौसल्यामाह सा सस्मिता सुतम्।। 48।।
धावत्यपि न शक्नोति स्प्रष्टुं योगिमनोगतिम्। प्रहसन्स्वयमायाति कर्दमाङ्कितपाणिना।
किञ्चिद् गृहीत्वा कवलं पुनरेव पलायते।।49।।

āhvayatyatiharṣeṇa premṇā nāyāti līlayā /
ānayeti ca kausalyāmāha sā sasmitā sutam//
dhāvatyapi na śaknoti spraṣṭuṃ yogimanogatim /
prahasansvayamāyāti kardamāṅkitapāṇinā /
kiñcid gṛhītvā kavalaṃ punareva palāyate //

When the child did not come (or pay heed), the king would ask Kaushalya to go and fetch him. But he, who is the only refuge/shelter for the mind-intellect of Yogis (ascetics), could not be caught by the mother who was laughing merrily and running behind him. (Seeing that the mother was tired of pursuing him—) He would himself come to Dashrath with hands besmeared with dirt and slush, took one or two morsels of food, and again ran away (48-49).

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कौसल्या जननी तस्य मासि मासि प्रकुर्वती। वायनानि विचित्राणि समलङ्कृत्य राघवम्।। 50।।
अपूपान्मोदकान्कृत्वा कर्णशष्कुलिकास्तथा। कर्णपूरांश्च विविधान् वर्षवृद्धौ च वायनम्।। 51।।

kausalyā jananī tasya māsi māsi prakurvatī /
vāyanāni vicitrāṇi samalaṅkṛtya rāghavam //
apūpānmodakānkṛtvā karṇaśaṣkulikāstathā /
karṇapūrāṅśca vividhān varṣavṛddhau ca vāyanam //

Mother Kaushalya used to dress Sri Ram in different attires, made various types of sweet dishes every month, and celebrated. And especially on his birthday, she made various delicacies, and celebrated the occasion with pomp and pageantry (50-51).

गृहकृत्यं तया त्यक्तं तस्य चापल्यकारणात्। एकदा रघुनाथोऽसौ गतो मातरमन्तिके।। 52।।
भोजनं देहि मे मातर्न श्रुतं कार्यसक्तया। ततः क्रोधेन भाण्डानि लगुडेनाहनत्तदा।। 53।।

gṛhakṛtyaṃ tayā tyaktaṃ tasya cāpalyakāraṇāt/
ekadā raghunātho'sau gato mātaramantike //
bhojanaṃ dehi me mātarna śrutaṃ kāryasaktayā /
tataḥ krodhena bhāṇḍāni laguḍenāhanattadā //

Due to the restiveness and mischief created by child Ram, Kaushalya had stopped attending to her routine household chores. One day, Sri Ram went to his mother and said (52), 'Oh mother, give me something to eat'. But she did not pay attention because of pre-occupation with some work. Then the child got so furious that he broke all the pots and pans with a stick (53).

शिक्यस्थं पातयामास गव्यं च नवनीतकम्। लक्ष्मणाय ददौ रामो भरताय यथाक्रमम्।। 54।।
शत्रुघ्नाय ददौ पश्चाद्दधि दुग्धं तथैव च। सूदेन कथिते मात्रे हास्यं कृत्वा प्रधावति।। 55।।

śikyasthaṃ pātayāmāsa gavyaṃ ca navanītakam/
lakṣmaṇāya dadau rāmo bharatāya yathākramam //
śatrughnāya dadau paścāddadhi dugdhaṃ tathaiva ca /
sūdena kathite mātre hāsyaṃ kṛtvā pradhāvati //

Then he pulled down milk and butter stored aloft in pots held by latticed strings, and distributed it along with all other milk and curd available there (in the kitchen larder) amongst Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan. The cook complained to the mother, who laughed in amusement and rushed forward to catch the child (54-55).

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आगतां तां विलोक्याथ ततः सर्वैः पलायितम्। कौसल्या धावमानापि प्रस्खलन्ती पदे पदे।। 56।।
रघुनाथं करे धृत्वा किञ्चिन्नोवाच भामिनी। बालभावं समाश्रित्य मन्दं मन्दं रुरोद ह।। 57।।

āgatāṃ tāṃ vilokyātha tataḥ sarvaiḥ palāyitam/
kausalyā dhāvamānāpi praskhalantī pade pade//
raghunāthaṃ kare dhṛtvā kiñcinnovāca bhāminī/
bālabhāvaṃ samāśritya mandaṃ mandaṃ ruroda ha//

Seeing the mother coming towards them, all the children ran away. Kaushalya ran behind them, but she slipped at every other step (56). At last she caught hold of Sri Ram, but did not say anything. At that moment, Sri Ram began weeping and sobbing like any other ordinary child (57).

ते सर्वे लालिता मात्रा गाढमालिङ्ग्य यत्नतः। एवमानन्दसन्दोहजगदानन्दकारकः।। 58।।
मायाबालवपुर्धृत्वा रमयामास दम्पती। अथ कालेन ते सर्वे कौमारं प्रतिपेदिरे।। 59।।

te sarve lālitā mātrā gāḍhamāliṅgya yatnataḥ/
evamānandasandohajagadānandakārakaḥ //
māyābālavapurdhṛtvā ramayāmāsa dampatī/
atha kālena te sarve kaumāraṃ pratipedire//

Seeing them all frightened of her, she affectionately embraced (clasped them to her bosom) and caressed them affectionately. In this way, Sri Ram—who is the cause of happiness and is the bestower of joy, bliss, peace and tranquility to the world as well as is a treasury or root of all happiness, joy and bliss—assumed an illusionary (pseudo) form of a child and began to provide happiness and delight to the royal couple. Thence, after sometime, the four brothers entered the period of adolescence (58-59).

उपनीता वसिष्ठेन सर्वविद्याविशारदाः। धनुर्वेदे च निरताः सर्वशास्त्रार्थवेदिनः।। 60।।
बभूवुर्जगतां नाथा लीलया नररूपिणः। लक्ष्मणस्तु सदा राममनुगच्छति सादरम्।। 61।।
सेव्यसेवकभावेन शत्रुघ्नो भरतं तथा। रामश्चापधरो नित्य तूणीबाणान्वितः प्रभुः।। 62।।
अश्वारूढो वनं याति मृगयायै सलक्ष्मणः। हत्वा दुष्टमृगान्सर्वान्पित्रे सर्वं न्यवेदयत्।। 63।।

upanītā vasiṣṭhena sarvavidyāviśāradāḥ/
dhanurvede ca niratāḥ sarvaśāstrārthavedinaḥ//
babhūvurjagatāṃ nāthā līlayā nararūpiṇaḥ/
lakṣmaṇastu sadā rāmamanugacchati sādaram//
sevyasevakabhāvena śatrughno bharataṃ tathā/
rāmaścāpadharo nityaṃ tūṇībāṇānvitaḥ prabhuḥ//

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aśvārūḍho vanaṃ yāti mṛgayāyai salakṣmaṇaḥ /
hatvā duṣṭamṛgānsarvānpitre sarvaṃ nyavedayat //

Then Guru Vashistha performed their 'sacred thread ceremony' and initiated them into the 'Kshatriya Dharma' (i.e. formally baptized them in the class of society to which their father belonged, which was the warrior class known as Kshatriya). Taking them under his wings as a teacher, he diligently and expertly taught them so that the four brothers—who had assumed the human form willingly out of their own delusion creating powers and who are the Lords of the entire universe—became proficient in the knowledge and essence of all the scriptures, became experts in the science and art of archery, besides acquiring all other skills and knowledge worth acquiring. Out of the three brothers, Laxman dedicatedly and diligently followed Sri Ram most reverentially just like a loyal follower (or a servant or slave) follows his lord, while Shatrughan was similarly always eager to serve Bharat. Every day, Sri Ram, armed with a bow, arrows and a quiver, would mount a horse, and accompanied by Laxman on another mount, the two brothers would go to the forest to hunt and slay wicked and cruel animals, and having hunted lions and tigers there, they would tell everything (about their exploits) to their father (60-63).

प्रातरुत्थाय सुस्नातः पितरावभिवाद्य च। पौरकार्याणि सर्वाणि करोति विनयान्वितः।। 64।।
बन्धुभिः सहितो नित्यं भुक्त्वा मुनिभिरन्वहम्। धर्मशास्त्ररहस्यानि श्रृणोति व्याकरोति च।।65।।

prātarutthāya susnātaḥ pitarāvabhivādya ca /
paurakāryāṇi sarvāṇi karoti vinayānvitaḥ //
bandhubhiḥ sahito nityaṃ bhuktvā munibhiranvaham /
dharmaśāstrarahasyāni śṛṇoti vyākaroti ca //

After rising up in the morning, he would bathe and bow his head reverentially before his parents, and then would take care of all the needs of all the citizens (or attend to the work) of the kingdom (64). Then he would take his meals along with his brothers, hear discourses on various scriptures from sages and seers, and discussed or explained them himself (for the benefit of his brothers as well as his friends and other citizens) (65).

एवं परात्मा मनुजावतारो मनुष्यलोकाननुसृत्य सर्वम्।
चक्रेऽविकारी परिणामहीनो विचार्यमाणे न करोति किञ्चित्।। 66।।

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evaṃ parātmā manujāvatāro manuṣyalokānanusṛtya sarvam /
cakre'vikārī pariṇāmahīno vicāryamāṇe na karoti kiñcit //

In this manner, the supreme Soul (Parmatma), who is faultless, beyond reproach and without any resultant consequences leading to an imperfect end (or one who, therefore, has no end and is unaffected by any results of any actions), took an incarnation i.e. revealed himself in the image (form) of a human, and acted in accordance with his assumed form (or role) to do and fulfill all that was to be done or fulfilled (for which he had assumed the human form in the first place). But on deeper thought (contemplation and pondering), we find that he does nothing for it is his delusion creating powers that appears to do all and weave this illusionary web of action-reaction-result-effect. The supreme Soul or Lord is totally unconcerned with or detached and distinct from this illusionary image of a human (66).

***

Baal Kand — Canto 4

Arrival of Vishwamitra; Departure of Ram and Laxman with him; Slaying of Tadka

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

कदाचित्कौशिकोऽभ्यागादयोध्यां ज्वलनप्रभः। द्रष्टुं रामं परात्मानं जातं ज्ञात्वा स्वमायया।।1।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

kadācitkauśiko'bhyāgādayodhyāṃ jvalanaprabhaḥ /
draṣṭuṃ rāmaṃ parātmānaṃ jātaṃ jñātvā svamāyayā //

Lord Shiva said—'Once, sage Vishwamitra, who was as radiant and brilliant with his spiritual energy as a glowing fire, realised (came to know or became aware of the fact) that the supreme Lord has manifested himself as Sri Ram (i.e. in a human form in the person of Sri Ram) using his own deluding and maverick powers called Maya. So he came to Ayodhya to have his Darshan (divine, holy viewing) (1).

दृष्ट्वा दशरथो राजा प्रत्युत्थायाचिरेण तु। वसिष्ठेन समागम्य पूजयित्वा यथाविधि।। 2।।
अभिवाद्य मुनिं राजा प्राञ्जलिर्भक्तिनम्रधीः। कृतार्थोऽस्मि मुनीन्द्राहं त्वदागमनकारणात्।।3।।

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त्वद्विधा यद्गृहं यान्ति तत्रैवायान्ति संपदः। यदर्थमागतोऽसि त्वं ब्रूहि सत्यं करोमि तत्।।4।।

dṛṣṭvā daśaratho rājā pratyutthāyācireṇa tu /
vasiṣṭhena samāgamya pūjayitvā yathāvidhi //
abhivādya muniṃ rājā prāñjalirbhaktinamradhīḥ /
kṛtārtho'smi munīndrāhaṃ tvadāgamanakāraṇāt //
tvadvidhā yadgṛham yānti tatraivāyānti saṁpadaḥ /
yadarthamāgato'si tvaṃ brūhi satyaṃ karomi tat //

Seeing him arrive at his palace, king Dashrath immediately stood up, and accompanied by Vashistha, he came forward to receive the sage. He duly worshipped him and paid his obeisance to him. Then the king folded his hands with great respect and devotion, and said prayerfully, 'Oh the most exalted sage! I have been highly obliged by your holy visit (3). Every prosperity, well-being and welfare comes in the household where a great and exalted soul like you ever pays a visit. Now tell me the reason for your auspicious visit. I tell you truthfully that I shall obey your commands' (4).

विश्वामित्रोऽपि तं प्रीतः प्रत्युवाच महामतिः। अहं पर्वणि संप्राप्ते दृष्ट्वा यष्टुं सुरान्पितॄन्।।5।।
यदारभे तदा दैत्या विघ्नं कुर्वन्ति नित्यशः। मारीचश्च सुबाहुश्चापरे चानुचरास्तयोः।।6।।

viśvāmitro'pi taṃ prītaḥ pratyuvāca mahāmatiḥ /
ahaṃ parvaṇi saṁprāpte dṛṣṭvā yaṣṭuṃ surānpitṝn //
yadārabhe tadā daityā vighnaṃ kurvanti nityaśaḥ /
mārīcaśca subāhuścāpare cānucarāstayoḥ //

Then that most wise sage Vishwamitra said, 'Whenever during the festival season (or during auspicious time), no sooner do I begin to perform the fire sacrifice in honour of Gods and dead ancestors than Marich, Subahu and their companion demons always start to defile/desecrate it (5-6).

अतस्तयोर्वधार्थाय ज्येष्ठं रामं प्रयच्छ मे। लक्ष्मणेन सह भ्रात्रा तव श्रेयो भविष्यति।।7।।
वसिष्ठेन सहामन्त्र्य दीयतां यदि रोचते। पप्रच्छ गुरुमेकान्ते राजा चिन्तापरायणः।।8।।

atastayorvadhārthāya jyeṣṭhaṃ rāmaṃ prayaccha me /
lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātrā tava śreyo bhaviṣyati //
vasiṣṭhena sahāmantrya dīyatāṃ yadi rocate /
papraccha gurumekānte rājā cintāparāyaṇaḥ //

Therefore, lend me your eldest son Sri Ram along with his brother

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Laxman so that these demons can be slayed (got rid of). This noble, honourable and valiant deed will result in great welfare for you as well (7). Consult sage Vashistha on this subject, and if you wish, give the two princes to me'. Worried and alarmed, the king took his Guru aside and said (8)—

किं करोमि गुरो रामं त्यक्तुं नोत्सहते मनः। बहुवर्षसहस्रान्ते कष्टेनोत्पादिताः सुताः।। 9।।
चत्वारोऽमरतुल्यास्ते तेषां रामोऽतिवल्लभः। रामस्त्वितो गच्छति चेन्न जीवामि कथञ्चन।। 10।।
प्रत्याख्यातो यदि मुनिः शापं दास्यत्यसंशयः। कथं श्रेयो भवेन्मह्यमसत्यं चापि न स्पृशेत्।। 11।।

kiṃ karomi guro rāmaṃ tyaktuṃ notsahate manaḥ /
bahuvarṣasahasrānte kaṣṭenotpāditāḥ sutāḥ //
catvāro'maratulyāste teṣāṃ rāmo'tivallabhaḥ /
rāmastvito gacchati cenna jīvāmi kathañcana //
pratyākhyāto yadi muniḥ śāpaṃ dāsyatyasaṁśayaḥ /
kathaṃ śreyo bhavenmahyamasatyaṃ cāpi na spṛśet //

'Oh Guru! After hundreds of years, I have got these God-like four sons with great difficulty (9). Out of them, Sri Ram is very dear to me; so what should I do now? My mind is not ready to allow me to part with him. If Sri Ram goes away from here, I shall not be able to survive (10). But if I refuse point blank, it is certain that the sage (Vishwamitra) would cast his wrathful curse on me. So, tell me how to safeguard my interest and I am also saved from the ignominy of having to tell a lie at the same time (by cooking up an alibi or a cock-and-bull story to avoid sending Sri Ram with the sage)' (11).

वसिष्ठ उवाच

श्रृणु राजन्देवगुह्यं गोपनीयं प्रयत्नतः। रामो न मानुषो जातः परमात्मा सनातनः।। 12।।
भूमेर्भारावताराय ब्रह्मणा प्रार्थितः पुरा। स एव जातो भवने कौसल्यायां तवानघ।। 13।।

vasiṣṭha uvāca

śṛṇu rājandevaguhyaṃ gopanīyaṃ prayatnataḥ /
rāmo na mānuṣo jātaḥ paramātmā sanātanaḥ //
bhūmerbhārāvatārāya brahmaṇā prārthitaḥ purā /
sa eva jāto bhavane kausalyāyāṃ tavānagha //

Sage Vashistha advised—'Oh king! Listen to a secret which should be concealed even from the Gods; it should not be divulged under any circumstances. This 'Ram' is not an ordinary human as you think

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him to be, but he is the eternal, absolute supreme Soul called Parmatma—who is eternal, infinite, imperishable, macrocosmic, all-pervading, all-encompassing, attributeless, supreme Lord of all creation—who has manifested himself (by his deluding power) in this form of a human being (12). Oh you 'Anagh' (the sinless, pure and faultless one)! In earlier times, Lord Brahma had prayed to the Lord to remove the burden of the earth caused by the demonic forces. The Lord has taken birth in your household from the womb of Kaushalya to fulfill the promise he had made to the Gods (13).

[Note—Guru Vashistha advocates that what he is going to say be kept top secret because if the demons got any hint that the Lord has finally come to get rid of them, they would take precautionary steps, and the purpose of the Lord's visit on the earth would be defeated. The Gods had taken birth as monkeys as described earlier, but such secrets should not be divulged to anyone from the strategic point of view.]

त्वं तु प्रजापतिः पूर्वं कश्यपो ब्रह्मणः सुतः। कौसल्या चादितिर्देवमाता पूर्वं यशस्विनी।
भवन्तौ तप उग्रं वै तेपाथे बहुवत्सरम्।। 14।।
अग्राम्यविषयौ विष्णुपूजाध्यानैकतत्परौ। तदा प्रसन्नो भगवान् वरदो भक्तवत्सलः।। 15।।

tvaṃ tu prajāpatiḥ pūrvaṃ kaśyapo brahmaṇaḥ sutaḥ /
kausalyā cāditirdevamātā pūrvaṃ yaśasvinī /
bhavantau tapa ugraṃ vai tepāthe bahuvatsaram //
agrāmyaviṣayau viṣṇupūjādhyānaikatatparau /
tadā prasanno bhagavān varado bhaktavatsalaḥ //

In your previous life you were Prajapati Kashyap, the son of Brahma and the guardian of the subjects of his creation, and Kaushalya was Aditi, the famed mother of Gods. At that time, both of you had detached yourselves from worldly attachments and material objects, and had instead concentrated solely on the worship and meditation of Lord Vishnu. You had undertaken severe penances and austerities (i.e. had done Tapa) (14). Then in due course of time, the Lord, who is magnanimous and munificent towards his devotees as well as is a bestower of boons, became pleased with you and had said, 'Be it as you wish' (15).

वृणीष्व वरमित्युक्ते त्वं मे पुत्रो भवामल। इति त्वया याचितोऽसौ भगवान्भूतभावनः।। 16।।
तथेत्युक्त्वाद्य पुत्रस्ते जातो रामः स एव हि। शेषस्तु लक्ष्मणो राजन् राममेवान्वपद्यत।। 17।।

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vṛṇīṣva varamityukte tvaṃ me putro bhavāmala /
iti tvayā yācito'sau bhagavānbhūtabhāvanaḥ //
tathetyuktvādya putraste jāto rāmaḥ sa eva hi /
śeṣastu lakṣmaṇo rājan rāmamevānvapadyate //

At that, you had requested the Lord— 'Oh the faultless and eternal one! You should become our son'. Upon this request of yours, the one who has no beginning (no past, because he is eternal and infinite) said, 'Let it be so' (16). Hence, that same Lord Vishnu who is the Lord of the universe has presently manifested himself (as an incarnation) in the form of your son, whereas Sheshnath (the legendary serpent) has manifested himself as Laxman to serve him (17).

जातौ भरतशत्रुघ्नौ शङ्खचक्रे गदाभृतः। योगमायापि सीतेति जाता जनकनन्दिनी।। 18।।
विश्वामित्रोऽपि रामाय तां योजयितुमागतः। एतद्गुह्यतमं राजन्न वक्तव्यं कदाचन।। 19।।
अतः प्रीतेन मनसा पूजयित्वाथ कौशिकम्। प्रेषयस्व रमानाथं राघवं सहलक्ष्मणम्।। 20।।

jātau bharataśatrughnau śaṅkhacakre gadābhṛtaḥ /
yogamāyāpi sīteti jātā janakanandinī //
viśvāmitro'pi rāmāya tāṃ yojayitumāgataḥ /
etadguhyatamaṃ rājanna vaktavyaṃ kadācana //
ataḥ prītena manasā pūjayitvātha kauśikam /
preṣayasva ramānāthaṃ rāghavaṃ sahalakṣmaṇam //

The mace-bearing Lord's (i.e. Vishnu's) conch and discus have taken birth (manifested themselves) in the form of Bharat and Shatrughan respectively, while his maverick and delusion creating powers called Maya have taken shape in the form of Sita, the daughter of Janak (18). Presently sage Vishwamitra has come with the intention (hidden agenda) of making a union between Sri Ram and Sita possible. So, Oh king! This is a top secret; you should never divulge it (19). (Now that you have become aware of the secret truth and the mystery behind Ram—) You should now, therefore, most cheerfully and willingly, welcome and pay your respects to sage Vishwamitra, and handover (i.e. send) Laxmi's Lord Raghav (Sri Ram) along with Laxman to him (without any further delay, demurring, doubting and dithering)' (20).

वसिष्ठेनैवमुक्तस्तु राजा दशरथस्तदा। कृतकृत्यमिवात्मानं मेने प्रमुदितान्तरः।। 21।।
आहूय रामरामेति लक्ष्मणेति च सादरम्। आलिङ्ग्य मूर्ध्न्यवघ्राय कौशिकाय समर्पयत्।। 22।।

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vasiṣṭhenaivamuktastu rājā daśarathastadā /
kṛtakṛtyamivātmānaṃ mene pramuditāntaraḥ //
āhūya rāmarāmeti lakṣmaṇeti ca sādaram /
āliṅgya mūrdhnavaghrāya kauśikāya samarpayat //

When sage Vashistha had thus explained everything to him, king Dashrath considered him self most fortunate and privileged, and with an exhilarated and cheerful mind (21), he respectfully called out 'Oh Ram, Oh Laxman'. When the two brothers came, he clasped them to his bosom, smelt their heads (as a token of deep love and affection), and then handed them over to sage Vishwamitra (22).

ततोऽतिहृष्टो भगवान्विश्वामित्रः प्रतापवान्। आशीर्भिरभिनन्द्याथ आगतौ रामलक्ष्मणौ।। 23 ।।
गृहीत्वा चापतूणीरबाणखड्गधरौ ययौ। किञ्चिद्देशमतिक्रम्य राममाहूय भक्तितः।। 24 ।।
ददौ बलां चातिबलां विद्ये द्वे देवनिर्मिते। ययोर्ग्रहणमात्रेण क्षुत्क्षामादि न जायते।। 25 ।।

tato'tihṛṣṭo bhagavānviśvāmitraḥ pratāpavān /
āśīrbhirabhinandyātha āgatau rāmalakṣmaṇau //
gṛhītvā cāpatūṇīrabāṇakhaḍgadharau yayau /
kiñciddeśamatikramya rāmamāhūya bhaktitaḥ //
dadau balāṃ cātibalāṃ vidye dve devanirmite /
yayorgrahaṇamātreṇa kṣutkṣāmādi na jāyate //

Then the most exalted, famed, dignified and influential sage Vishwamitra honoured him (Dashrath) most cheerfully and joyously with the choicest of blessings. Sri Ram and Laxman went near the sage (23). They were armed (adorned) with bows, quivers, arrows and swords etc. Taking them along with him, the sage departed from there. After some distance (away from the periphery of the city), Vishwamitra called Sri Ram near him most reverentially and full of devotion (24). He gave him two special and mystical powers called 'Balaa' and 'Ati Balaa' which helped those who possessed them to overcome hunger and weakness as well as weariness and tiredness. These special skills, known as 'Vidyas', were created by the Gods and were meant for their exclusive use so that they can successfully accomplish the formidable task at hand (25).

तत उत्तीर्य गङ्गां ते ताटकावनमागमन्। विश्वामित्रस्तदा प्राह रामं सत्यपराक्रमम्।। 26 ।।
अत्रास्ति ताटका नाम राक्षसी काममरूपिणी। बाधते लोकमखिलं जहि तामविचारयन्।। 27 ।।
तथेति धनुरादाय सगुणं रघुनन्दनः। टङ्कारमकरोत्तेन शब्देनापूरयद्वनम्।। 28 ।।

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tata uttīrya gaṅgāṃ te tāṭakāvanamāgaman /
viśvāmitrastadā prāha rāmaṃ satyaparākramam //
atrāsti tāṭakā nāma rākṣasī kāmarūpiṇī /
bādhate lokamakhilaṃ jahi tāmavicārayan //
tatheti dhanurādāya saguṇaṃ raghunandanaḥ /
ṭaṅkāramakarottena śabdenāpūrayadvanam //

Thence, they crossed river Ganges and arrived at the woods called 'Tataka forest'. Sage Vishwamitra said to the truly brave, valorous and victorious Sri Ram (26), 'A demoness named Tadka, who is able to assume any form of her choice, stays here. She tyrannises and torments all the inhabitants of this place; you must slay her without any second thoughts' (27). Raghunandan (i.e. the exalted son born in the clan of king Raghu; here meaning Sri Ram) said 'Yes', strung his bow and pulled it. The twang sound emanating from it reverberated in the whole forest (28).

तच्छ्रुत्वासहमाना सा ताटका घोररूपिणी। क्रोधसंमूर्च्छिता राममभिदुद्राव मेघवत्।। 29।।
तामेकेन शरेणाशु ताडयामास वक्षसि। पपात विपिने घोरा वमन्ती रुधिरं बहु।। 30।।

tacchṛtvāsahamānā sā tāṭakā ghorarūpiṇī /
krodhasaṃmūrcchitā rāmamabhidudrāva meghavat //
tāmekena śareṇāśu tāḍayāmāsa vakṣasi /
papāta vipine ghorā vamantī rudhiraṃ bahu //

Hearing that fierce twang sound and unable to tolerate it, the ferocious and terrible-looking Tadka became mad with anger. She furiously rushed forward towards Sri Ram like a huge dark bank of doomsday cloud (29). Immediately, he (Sri Ram) shot an arrow aimed at her bosom, at which that horrible demoness vomited/spitted a lot of blood and fell down on the ground in the forest (30).

ततोऽतिसुन्दरी यक्षी सर्वाभरणभूषिता। शापात्पिशाचतां प्राप्ता मुक्ता रामप्रसादतः।। 31।।
नत्वां रामं परिक्रम्य गता रामाज्ञया दिवम्।। 32।।

tato'tisundarī yakṣī sarvābharaṇabhūṣitā /
śāpātpiśācatāṃ prāptā muktā rāmaprasādataḥ //
natvā rāmaṃ parikramya gatā rāmājñayā divam //

Then Tadka, who had earlier been turned into a demoness due to a curse, was immediately liberated from her evil and sinful body due

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to the munificence, grace and kindness of Sri Ram and reverted back to her original form of a fully decorated Yakshini (a demi-Goddess) adorned by various ornaments. Thereafter, she circumambulated Sri Ram, bowed before him in respect and to pay her sincere obeisance, and then went back away to the heavens by his permission (31-32).

ततोऽतिहृष्टः परिरभ्य रामं मूर्धन्यवघ्राय विचिन्त्य किञ्चित्।
सर्वास्त्रजालं सरहस्यमन्त्रं प्रीत्याभिरामाय ददौ मुनीन्द्रः।।33।।

tato'tihṛṣṭaḥ parirabhya rāmaṃ mūrdhanyavaghrāya vicintya kiñcit /
sarvāstrajālaṃ sarahasyamantraṃ prītyābhirāmāya dadau munīndraḥ //

Then being most thrilled and exhilarated with joy, sage Vishwamitra affectionately embraced Sri Ram, smelt his head (as a token of love and affection), and after due thought and consideration, he gave (i.e. divulged the secret art of; or revealed) to him all the arms and armaments along with their operational secrets (i.e. methods of using them) as well as the various Mantras associated with them (so that they can be invoked when the need arose and make them effective) (33).

* * *

Baal Kand — Canto 5

Vanquishing Marich and Subahu; liberation of Ahilya

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

तत्र कामाश्रमे रम्ये कानने मुनिसङ्कुले। उषित्वा रजनीमेकां प्रभाते प्रस्थिताः शनैः।।1।।
सिद्धाश्रमं गताः सर्वे सिद्धचारणसेवितम्। विश्वामित्रेण संदिष्टा मुनयस्तन्निवासिनः।।2।।
पूजां च महतीं चक्रू रामलक्ष्मणयोर्दुतम्। श्रीरामः कौशिकं प्राह मुने दीक्षां प्रविश्यताम्।।3।।
दर्शयस्व महाभाग कुतस्तौ राक्षसाधमौ। तथेत्युक्त्वा मुनिर्यष्टुमारेभे मुनिभिः सह।।4।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tatra kāmāśrame ramye kānane munisaṅkule /
uṣitvā rajanīmekāṃ prabhāte prasthitāḥ śanaiḥ //
siddhāśramaṃ gatāḥ sarve siddhacāraṇasevitam /
viśvāmitreṇa saṁdiṣṭā munayastannivāsinaḥ //
pūjāṃ ca mahatīṃ cakrū rāmalakṣmaṇayordrutam /
śrīrāmaḥ kauśikaṃ prāha mune dīkṣāṃ praviśyatām //

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darśayasva mahābhāgap kutastau rākṣasādhamau /
tathetyuktvā muniryaṣṭumārebhe munibhiḥ saha //

Lord Shiva continued with his narration, 'Oh Parvati! Thereafter, both the brothers along with sage Vishwamitra spent the night in the forest called 'Kamashram' which was inhabited by sages and hermits. At the crack of dawn, they proceeded from there slowly onwards on their journey (1). They next arrived at 'Siddhashram' which was served by Siddhas (mystics; attained and expert ones) and wandering bards. The resident hermits and sages of the place, on the instructions of sage Vishwamitra (2), swiftly welcomed and worshipped Sri Ram and Laxman. After that, Sri Ram advised Kaushik (Vishwamitra) thus—'Oh sage! Engage yourself in your religious rituals (i.e. fire sacrifice) (3), and show us where those evil demons are'. Saying 'alright', the sage started the performance of his fire sacrifice, accompanied by other sages and seers (4).

[Note—The Kamashram was a forest where desires could be fulfilled by doing Tapa, or observing austerities and doing penances, while the Siddhashram was the forest that bestowed mystical powers on those who stayed there and did Tapa.]

मध्याह्ने ददृशाते तौ राक्षसौ कामरूपिणौ। मारीचश्च सुबाहुश्च वर्षन्तौ रुधिरास्थिनी।। 5।।
रामोऽपि धनुरादाय द्वौ बाणौ सन्दधे सुधीः। आकर्णान्तं समाकृष्य विससर्ज तयोः पृथक्।।6।।

madhyāhne dadṛśāte tau rākṣasau kāmarūpiṇau /
mārīcaśca subāhuśca varṣantau rudhirāsthinī //
rāmo'pi dhanurādāya dvau bāṇau sandadhe sudhīḥ /
ākarṇāntaṃ samākṛṣya visasarja tayoḥ pṛthak //

At about noon, two demons known as Marich and Subahu, who had the special ability to assume any form they wished, were seen raining blood and bones (on the sacrificial fire pit) (5). The wise and intelligent Sri Ram took two arrows and mounted them on his bow, pulled the string right up to his ears and shot the arrows separately at those two demons (6).

तयोरेकस्तु मारीचं भ्रामयञ्छतयोजनम्। पातयामास जलधौ तदद्भुतमिवाभवत्।।7।।
द्वितीयोऽग्निमयो बाणः सुबाहुमजयत्क्षणात्। अपरे लक्ष्मणेनाशु हतास्तदनुयायिनः।।8।।

tayorekastu mārīcaṃ bhrāmayañchatayojanam /
pātayāmāsa jaladhau tadadbhutamivābhavat //

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dvitīyo'gnimayo bāṇaḥ subāhumajayatkṣaṇāt /
apare lakṣamaṇenāśu hatāstadanuyāyinaḥ //

One of the arrows spun Marich (like a top) in the sky and threw (flung) him hundreds of miles away in the ocean. This was a stupendously astounding and most astonishing feat (7). The second arrow which was tipped with fire burnt Subahu to ashes in a second, while the rest of the demons were instantly killed by Laxman (8).

पुष्पौघैराकिरन्देवा राघवं सहलक्ष्मणम्। देवदुन्दुभयो नेदुस्तुष्टुवुः सिद्धचारणाः।। 9।।
विश्वामित्रस्तु संपूज्य पूजार्हं रघुनन्दनम्। अङ्के निवेश्य चालिङ्ग्य भक्त्या वाष्पाकुलेक्षणः।। 10।।
भोजयित्वा सह भ्रात्रा रामं पक्वफलादिभिः। पुराणवाक्यैर्मधुरैर्निनाय दिवसत्रयम्।। 11।।

puṣpaughairākirandevā rāghavaṃ sahalakṣmaṇam /
devadundubhayo nedustuṣṭuvuḥ siddhacāraṇāḥ //
viśvāmitrastu saṃpūjya pūjārhaṃ raghunandanam /
aṅke niveśya cāliṅgya bhaktyā vāṣpākulekṣaṇaḥ //
bhojayitvā saha bhrātrā rāmaṃ pakvaphalādibhiḥ /
purāṇavākyairmadhurairnirnāya divasatrayam //

To celebrate the occasion, the Gods showered flowers on Laxman and Raghav (Sri Ram), sounded their kettledrums and trumpets, while the Siddhas (mystics) and bards began to sing their own praises in honour of the glories of Sri Ram (9). Sage Vishwamitra duly worshipped Raghunandan (Sri Ram) with great reverence, lifted him affectionately onto his laps and embraced him to his bosom, with eyes filled with tears of love, affection and devotion. [The sage was overwhelmed with affection and surging devotion; his fatherly emotions spilled over from his heart, and he felt extremely privileged, lucky and exhilarant.] (10). Then he offered ripe fruits to Sri Ram and Laxman, told them stories from the Purans and other scriptures, and in this way three cheerful days passed (11).

चतुर्थेऽहनि संप्राप्ते कौशिको राममब्रवीत्। राम राम महायज्ञं द्रष्टुं गच्छामहे वयम्।। 12।।
विदेहराजनगरे जनकस्य महात्मनः। तत्र माहेश्वरं चापमस्ति न्यस्तं पिनाकिना।। 13।।
द्रक्ष्यसि त्वं महासत्त्वं पूज्यसे जनकेन च। इत्युक्त्वा मुनिभिस्ताभ्यां ययौ गङ्गासमीपगम्।। 14।।
गौतमस्याश्रमं पुण्यं यत्राहल्यास्थिता तपः। दिव्यपुष्पफलोपेतपादपैः परिवेष्टितम्।। 15।।

caturthe'hani saṃprāpte kauśiko rāmamabravīt /
rāma rāma mahāyajñaṃ draṣṭuṃ gacchāmahe vayam //

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videharājanagare janakasya mahātmanaḥ /
tatra māheśvaraṃ cāpamasti nyastaṃ pināķinā //
drakṣyasi tvaṃ mahāsattvaṃ pūjyase janakena ca /
ityuktvā munibhistābhyāṃ yayau gaṅgāsamīpagam //
gautamasyāśramaṃ puṇyaṃ yatrāhalyāsthitā tapaḥ /
divyapuṣpaphalopetapādapaiḥ parivesṭitam //

On the fourth day, Kaushik (Vishwamitra) told the Lord, 'Oh Sri Ram! We shall go to Janakpur to see a great 'Yagya' (a ceremonial, religious get together) (12). There is a very huge, strong and formidable bow called Pinak, belonging to Lord Shiva, kept there (13). You shall see that strong and sturdy bow, and king Janak shall duly welcome and show respect and honour to you'. Having said so, sage Vishwamitra, along with other sages, Sri Ram and Laxman came to the hermitage of the most exalted sage Gautam near the river Ganges. It was full of trees bearing divine and auspicious fruits, and Ahilya (the wife of the sage) was doing severe penances and austerities (Tapa) there (14-15).

मृगपक्षिगणैर्हीनं नानाजन्तुविवर्जितम्। दृष्ट्वोवाच मुनिं श्रीमान् रामो राजीवलोचनः।। 16।।
कस्यैतदाश्रमपदं भाति भास्वच्छुभं महत्। पत्रपुष्पफलैर्युक्तं जन्तुभिः परिवर्जितम्।। 17।।
आह्लादयति मे चेतो भगवन् ब्रूहि तत्त्वतः।। 18।।

mṛgapakṣigaṇairhīnaṃ nānājantuvivarjitaṃ /
dṛṣṭvovāca muniṃ śrīmān rāmo rājīvalocanaḥ //
kasyaitadāśramapadaṃ bhāti bhāsvacchubhaṃ mahat /
patrapuṣpaphalairyuktaṃ jantubhiḥ parivarjitam //
āhlādayati me ceto bhagavan brūhi tattvataḥ //

Seeing that hermitage devoid of any form of life, such as animals, birds or any other type of living creature, the lotus-eyed Sri Ram asked the sage the reason for it (16), 'Whose hermitage is this which is endowed with leaves, flowers and fruits but is totally lacking in any living being, and which appears intrinsically to be very beautiful, attractive, auspicious and pure? Oh Lord, seeing it, my mind and intellect seems to be very delighted, enchanted and pleased; so please tell me all about it' (17-18).

श्रीविश्वामित्र उवाच

शृणु राम पुरा वृत्तं गौतमो लोकविश्रुतः। सर्वधर्मभृतां श्रेष्ठस्तपसाराधयन् हरिम्।। 19।।

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तस्मै ब्रह्मा ददौ कन्यामहल्यां लोकसुन्दरीम्। ब्रह्मचर्येण सन्तुष्टः शुश्रूषणपरायणाम्।। 20।।
तया सार्धमिहावात्सीद्गौतमस्तपतां वरः। शक्रस्तु तां धर्षयितुमन्तरं प्रेप्सुरन्वहम्।। 21।।

śrīviśvāmitra uvāca

śṛṇu rāma purā vṛttaṃ gautamo lokaviśrutaḥ /
sarvadharmabhṛtāṃ śreṣṭhastapasārādhayan harim //
tasmai brahmā dadau kanyāmahalyāṃ lokasundarīm /
brahmacaryeṇa santuṣṭaḥ śuśrūṣaṇaparāyaṇām //
tayā sārdhamihāvatsīdgautamastapatāṃ varaḥ /
śakrastu tāṃ dharṣayitumantaraṃ prepsuranvaham //

Sage Vishwamitra replied, 'Oh Sri Ram, listen to the earlier history of this hermitage. The world famous, most exalted and religious minded pious sage Gautam used to live here and worshipped Sri Hari (Vishnu) by offering austerities and penances to him (19). Pleased by his celibacy and austerities, Brahma gave him a girl name Ahilya—who was the most beautiful in the world and very diligent and sincere in her duties—to serve him (20). Gautam, who was most proficient in penances and austerities, stayed here with Ahilya. On the other hand, the Lord of Gods, Indra, was infatuated by her bewitching beauty, charm and glamour. He coveted her lasciviously and was on the lookout for an opportunity to have sex with her (21).

कदाचिन्मुनिवेषेण गौतमे निर्गते गृहात्। धर्षयित्वाथ निरगात्त्वरितं मुनिरप्यगात्।। 22।।
दृष्ट्वा यान्तं स्वरूपेण मुनिः परमकोपनः। पप्रच्छ कस्त्वं दुष्टात्मन्मम रूपधरोऽधमः।। 23।।
सत्यं ब्रूहि न चेद्भस्म करिष्यामि न संशयः। सोऽब्रवीद्देवराजोऽहं पाहि मां कामकिङ्करम्।। 24।।

kadācinmuniveṣeṇa gautame nirgate gṛhāt /
dharṣayitvātha niragāttvaritaṃ munirapyagāt //
dṛṣṭvā yāntaṃ svarūpeṇa muniḥ paramakopanaḥ /
papraccha kastvaṃ duṣṭātmanmama rūpadharo'dhamaḥ //
satyaṃ brūhi na cedbhasma kariṣyāmi na saṁśayaḥ /
so'bravīddevarājo'haṃ pāhi māṃ kāmakiṅkaram //

Once, when sage Gautam had gone out of the hermitage, he assumed a fictitious form of the sage, had intercourse with her and left in a hurry. But the sage also came there at that moment (22). Seeing him fleeing from there disguised as himself, Gautam became furious, and most angrily demanded—'Oh you wicked soul! Oh you lowly and depraved evil rascal! Who are you to have disguised yourself as

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me (or, have assumed my form)? (23). Tell me the truth—otherwise I shall reduce you to ashes immediately. Do not doubt about it'. Then Indra, caught on the back foot, said, 'Oh Lord! I am Indra, but I was overcome with lust and passion. Save me (or have mercy on me) (24).

कृतं जुगुप्सितं कर्म मया कुत्सितचेतसा। गौतमः क्रोधताम्राक्षः शशाप दिविजाधिपम्।। 25।।
योनिलम्पट दुष्टात्मन्सहस्त्रभगवान्भव। शप्त्वा तं देवराजानं प्रविश्य स्वाश्रमं द्रुतम्।। 26।।
दृष्ट्वाहल्यां वेपमानां प्राञ्जलिं गौतमोऽब्रवीत्। दुष्टे त्वं तिष्ठ दुर्वृत्ते शिलायामाश्रमे मम।। 27।।

kṛtaṃ jugupsitaṃ karma mayā kutsitacetasā /
gautamaḥ krodhatāmrākṣaḥ śaśāpa divijādhipam //
yonilampaṭa duṣṭātmansahasrabhagavānbhava /
śaptvā taṃ devarājānaṃ praviśya svāśramaṃ drutam //
dṛṣṭvāhalyāṃ vepamānāṃ prāñjaliṃ gautamo'bravīt /
duṣṭe tvaṃ tiṣṭha durvṛtte śilāyāmāśrame mama //

This sinful one has done a very heinous, ignoble and reprehensible deed'. Then Gautam's eyes turned red with anger and he cursed Indra (25), 'Oh you wicked, pervert soul! You are infatuated (attracted) to a vagina, so let your body have hundred holes'. Having cursed the king of Gods, the sage entered his hermitage to find Ahilya completely taken aback, and shaking with fear, she stood with palms joined together in submission. Seeing her, Gautam cursed her, 'Oh you wicked one! You should live in my Ashram (hermitage) as a lifeless stone (a boulder or rock) (26-27).

निराहारा दिवारात्रं तपः परममास्थिता। आतपानिलवर्षादिसहिष्णुः परमेश्वरम्।। 28।।
ध्यायन्ती राममेकाग्रमनसा हृदि संस्थितम्। नानाजन्तुविहीनोऽयमाश्रमो मे भविष्यति।। 29।।

nirāhārā divārātraṃ tapaḥ paramamāsthitā /
ātapānilavarṣādisahiṣṇuḥ parameśvaram //
dhyāyantī rāmamekāgramanasā hṛdi saṁsthitam /
nānājantuvihīno'yamāśramo me bhaviṣyati //

Perform Tapa (severe austerities and penances) here night and day without food, coping with the sun, wind and rain, and concentrate on Lord Ram who resides in your heart (as your pure consciousness and Atma). From now onwards, this Ashram of mine shall be devoid of all living creatures (and shall become desolate for all practical purposes) (28-29).

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एवं वर्षसहस्रेषु ह्यनेकेषु गतेषु च। रामो दाशरथिः श्रीमानागमिष्यति सानुजः।। 30।।
यदा त्वदाश्रयशिलां पादाभ्यामाक्रमिष्यति। तदैव धूतपापा त्वं रामं संपूज्य भक्तितः।।31।।
परिक्रम्य नमस्कृत्य स्तुत्वा शापाद्विमोक्ष्यसे। पूर्ववन्मम शुश्रूषां करिष्यसि यथासुखम्।।32।।

evaṃ varṣasahasreṣu hyanekeṣu gateṣu ca /
rāmo dāśarathiḥ śrīmānāgamiṣyati sānujaḥ //
yadā tvadāśrayaśilāṃ pādābhyāmākramiṣyati /
tadaiva dhūtapāpā tvaṃ rāmaṃ saṃpūjya bhaktitaḥ //
parikramya namaskṛtya stutvā śāpādvimokṣyase /
pūrvavanmama śuśrūṣāṃ kariṣyasi yathāsukham //

After the passage of many thousand years, Dashrath's son Sri Ram, along with his brother Laxman, shall come here (30). When he (Sri Ram) will put his feet on the stone (rock), which shall be your form (or refuge) till that moment, you will be freed from your sins and consequences of your misdemeanours. You shall then worship Sri Ram with due reverence and devotion (31), circumambulate him, bow before him to pay your obeisance, praise and honour him, and thereby get yourself absolved of this curse. Thereafter, you shall again be able to serve me most happily as you had been doing till today' (32).

इत्युक्त्वा गौतमः प्रागाद्धिमवन्तं नगोत्तमम्। तदाद्यहल्या भूतानामदृश्या स्वाश्रमे शुभे।। 33।।
तव पादरजःस्पर्शं काङ्क्षते पवनाशना। आस्तेऽद्यापि रघुश्रेष्ठ तपो दुष्करमास्थिता।। 34।।

ityuktvā gautamaḥ prāgāddhimavantaṃ nagottamam /
tadādyahalyā bhūtānāmadṛśyā svāśrame śubhe //
tava pādarajaḥsparśaṃ kāṅkṣate pavanāśanā /
āste'dyāpi raghuśreṣṭha tapo duṣkaramāsthitā //

Saying thus, the most exalted sage Gautam went to the Himalaya which is the best amongst the mountains. Oh the best in the clan of Raghu (i.e. Sri Ram)! Ever since that day, Ahilya has survived eating air and doing severe penances with the hope that one day you would touch her with your holy feet. She has lived without any contact with any living creature for all this long while in this auspicious but desolate hermitage (33-34).

पावयस्व मुनेर्भार्यामहल्यां ब्रह्मणः सुताम्। इत्युक्त्वा राघवं हस्ते गृहीत्वा मुनिपुङ्गवः।। 35।।
दर्शयामास चाहल्यामुग्रेण तपसा स्थिताम्। रामः शिलां पदा स्पृष्ट्वा तां चापश्यत्तपोधनाम्।। 36।।

pāvayasva munerbhāryāmahalyāṃ brahmaṇaḥ sutām /
ityuktvā rāghavaṃ haste gṛhītvā munipuṅgavaḥ //

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darśayāmāsa cāhalyāmugreṇa tapasā sthitām /
rāmaḥ śilāṃ padā spṛṣṭvā tāṃ cāpaśyattapodhanām //

Now you should provide liberation to the daughter of Brahma and the wife of Gautam, namely Ahilya'. Saying this, sage Vishwamitra held Raghav (Sri Ram) by his hand and showed him Ahilya who was steeped and engrossed in doing severe penances and austerities. Then Sri Ram touched that stone (a boulder or rock) with his holy feet and looked at Ahilya who was engaged in deep contemplation and meditation (35-36).

ननाम राघवोऽहल्यां रामोऽहमिति चाब्रवीत्। ततो दृष्ट्वा रघुश्रेष्ठं पीतकौशेयवाससम्।। 37।।
चतुर्भुजं शङ्खचक्रगदापङ्कजधारिणम्। धनुर्बाणधरं रामं लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितम्।। 38।।
स्मितवक्त्रं पद्मनेत्रं श्रीवत्साङ्कितवक्षसम्। नीलमाणिक्यसङ्काशं द्योतयन्तं दिशो दश।। 39।।

nanāma rāghavo'halyāṃ rāmo'hamiti cābravīt /
tato dṛṣṭvā raghuśreṣṭhaṃ pītakauśeyavāsasam //
caturbhujaṃ śaṅkhacakragadāpaṅkajadhāriṇam /
dhanurbāṇadharaṃ rāmaṃ lakṣmaṇena samanvitam //
smitavaktraṃ padmanetraṃ śrīvatsāṅkitavakṣasam /
nīlamāṇikyasaṅkāśaṃ dyotayantaṃ diśo daśa //

Seeing her, Raghav (Sri Ram) said 'I am Ram' and bowed before her respectfully. Then Ahilya looked at the one who was the best in Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) and was wearing a silk Pitambar (37). His four arms were adorned by a conch, discus, mace and lotus respectively, a bow and arrow were slung on his shoulders, and he was accompanied by Laxman (38). His face had a bewitching enigmatic smile, eyes were beautiful like lotus flowers, and the chest was adorned by the foot print of sage Brighu, called Sri Vatsa. All the ten directions of the world were being lighted (illuminated) by the radiance and glow effusing from his dark complexioned form (image, body) which resembled a 'Neel Mani' (a blue gem—sapphire) (39).

दृष्ट्वा रामं रमानाथं हर्षविस्फारितेक्षणा। गौतमस्य वचः स्मृत्वा ज्ञात्वा नारायणं परम्।। 40।।
संपूज्य विधिवद्रामम्घ्यादिभिरनिन्दिता। हर्षाश्रुजलनेत्रान्ता दण्डवत्प्रणिपत्य सा।।41।।
उत्थाय च पुनर्दृष्ट्वा रामं राजीवलोचनम्। पुलकाङ्कितसर्वाङ्गा गिरा गद्गदयैलत।। 42।।

dṛṣṭvā rāmaṃ ramānāthaṃ harṣavisphāritekṣaṇā /
gautamasya vacaḥ smṛtvā jñātvā nārāyaṇaṃ param //

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saṃpūjya vidhivadrāmamarghyādibhiranindītā /
harṣāśrujalanetrāntā daṇḍavatpraṇipatya sā //
utthāya ca punardṛṣṭvā rāmaṃ rājīvalocanam /
pulakāṅkitasarvāṅgā girā gadgadayailata //

Seeing Sri Ram who is the Lord of Laxmi (Ramanath is one of the names of Lord Vishnu; literally meaning the Lord of Laxmi), the eyes of Ahilya lit up with joy and delight, and she recalled the words of sage Gautam. Recognising (or realising) that he (Sri Ram) was Lord Narayan (Vishnu) himself (40), that un-blemished, untainted, pure and faultless lady worshipped and adored him by offering oblations etc., and prostrated before him with eyes welling up with tears of extreme joy, thanksgiving and happiness (41). Then she stood up, and seeing the lotus-eyed Sri Ram standing in front of her, her whole body was thrilled, and she began to praise him and sing his glories as follows (42)—

अहल्योवाच

अहो कृतार्थास्मि जगन्निवास ते पादाब्जसंलग्नरजःकणादहम्।
स्पृशामि यत्पद्मजशङ्करादिभिर्विमृग्यते रन्धितमानसैः सदा।।43।।

ahalyovāca

aho kṛtārthāsmi jagannivāsa te pādābjasaṁlagnarajaḥkaṇādaham /
spṛśāmi yatpadmajaśaṅkarādibhirvimṛgyate randhitamānasaiḥ sadā //

Ahilya said, 'Oh the abode (refuge, shelter) of this whole world (creation)! I have become highly obliged, fortunate and privileged by having got the touch of the dust of your feet. Oh! It is a matter of great luck that I am touching those holy feet of yours which are the subject matter of constant contemplation and enquiry by Lords Brahma and Shiva themselves (43).

अहो विचित्रं तव राम चेष्टितं मनुष्यभावेन विमोहितं जगत्।
चलस्यजस्रं चरणादिवर्जितः सम्पूर्ण आनन्दमयोऽतिमायिकः।।44।।

aho vicitraṃ tava rāma ceṣṭitaṃ manuṣyabhāvena vimohitaṃ jagat /
calasyajasraṃ caraṇādivarjitaḥ sampūrṇa ānandamayo'timāyikaḥ //

Oh Sri Ram! Your maverick sports and deceptive playful activities are very mysteries and strange; the whole world is in thrall and under the deluding spell of your human-like behaviour. You are an

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embodiment of complete bliss, peace and tranquility, and are empowered with the illusion-creating, magical powers, because inspite of being without a feet, you always keep on moving (44).

यत्पादपङ्कजपरागपवित्रगात्रा भागीरथी भवविरिञ्चिमुखान्पुनाति।
साक्षात्स एव मम दृग्विषयो यदास्ते किं वर्ण्यते मम पुराकृतभागधेयम्।। 45।।

yatpādapaṅkajaparāgapavitragātrā
bhāgīrathī bhavaviriñcimukhānpunāti /
sākṣātsa eva mama dṛgviṣayo yadāste
kiṃ varṇyate mama purākṛtabhāgadheyam //

He, the nectar of whose holy feet purifies (or endows with purity, sanctity, holiness, sacredness) the waters of river Ganges (Bhagirathi) which in turn becomes potent enough to purify (or make holy, endow with divinity and sacredness) even Shiva, Brahma and other Lords of the universe—today the same holy and divine feet have become the object (of adoration and reverential viewing) of my eyes. (I feel so honoured, obliged, privileged and exhilarated that) I do not know how to describe my past good deeds (and their good effects)? (45).

मर्त्यावतारे मनुजाकृतिं हरिं रामाभिधेयं रमणीयदेहिनम्।
धनुर्धरं पद्मविशाललोचनं भजामि नित्यं न परान्भजिष्ये।। 46।।

martyāvatāre manujākṛtiṃ hariṃ rāmābhidheyaṃ ramaṇīyadehinam /
dhanurdharaṃ padmaviśālalocanaṃ bhajāmi nityaṃ na parānbhajiṣye //

I worship and constantly remember or meditate upon Sri Ram who holds a bow, is lotus-eyed, and is the supreme Lord Hari (Vishnu) who has incarnated (revealed) himself in a human form in this mortal world. Except him, I do not wish to worship, adore, honour or meditate upon anyone else (46).

यत्पादपङ्कजरजः श्रुतिभिर्विमृग्यं यन्नाभिपङ्कजभवः कमलासनश्च।
यन्नामसाररसिको भगवान्पुरारिस्तं रामचन्द्रमनिशं हृदि भावयामि।। 47।।

yatpādapaṅkajarajaḥ śrutibhirvimṛgyaṃ
yannābhipaṅkajabhavaḥ kamalāsanaśca /
yannāmasāraraśiko bhagavānpurāristaṃ
rāmacandramaniśaṃ hṛdi bhāvayāmi //

I contemplate and meditate upon Sri Ram, the dust of whose lotus-

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like feet are much sought after even by the Vedas. Even Brahma has manifested himself from the lotus emerging from his navel, and Lord Shiva is intoxicated by, and is an admirer of, the nectar of his holy name (47).

यस्यावतारचरितानि विरिञ्चिलोके गायन्ति नारदमुखा भवपद्मजाद्याः।
आनन्दजाश्रुपरिषिक्तकुचाग्रसीमा वागीश्वरी च तमहं शरणं प्रपद्ये।।48।।

yasyāvatāracaritāni viriñciloke
gāyanti nāradamukhā bhavapadmajādyāḥ /
ānandajāśruparişiktakucāgrasīmā
vāgīśvarī ca tamahaṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadye //

I take refuge (shelter) in the holy feet of the Lord. The worldly activities (i.e. playful sports) which he undertook during his incarnation are being constantly sung and lauded in the heavens by sage Narad and other celestial sages, Lords Brahma, Shiva and other Lords of Gods, as well as by Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge and wisdom) whose bosom is wet by tears of exhilaration, extreme joy and bliss flowing down from her eyes (48).

सोऽयं परात्मा पुरुषः पुराण एकः स्वयंज्योतिरनन्त आद्यः।
मायातनुं लोकविमोहनीयां धत्ते परानुग्रह एष रामः।।49।।

so'yaṃ parātmā puruṣaḥ purāṇā ekaḥ svayaṁjyotirananta ādyaḥ /
māyātanuṃ lokavimohanīyāṃ dhatte parānugraha eṣa rāmaḥ //

That supreme, transcendental Lord, who is one and the only one, who is famed in the Purans as the self-illuminated, eternal and infinite ancient one who was there even at the beginning of creation, has assumed an illusionary human form, using his own delusion creating maverick powers called Maya, to show his profound graciousness, munificence, magnanimity, benediction and benevolence on this world. This human form of the Lord is most captivating, enthralling, charming and pleasant, so much so that it holds the entire world in its thrall and keeps it spellbound (49).

[Note—The Lord decided to oblige his devotees by taking a birth so that they can sing his divine deeds and stories associated with him, and though they may not be enough intellectually evolved to understand the Vedas and other scriptures and obtain liberation and deliverance from this entrapping world of birth and death, they will

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still have the same benefit by singing his glories as Ram. Again, the Lord would be able to fulfill the desires of those devotees who wish to see him in a visible form that they can worship and adore. Further, the Lord would use this opportunity to preach the glories tenets of the scriptures himself, as is evident with this particular Ramayan which is packed with spiritual wisdom and philosophy. Simultaneously, the Lord wished to set practical guidelines for day to day behaviour of creatures in the world, which he could do only if he became one like them and lived with them, suffering and enjoying the horrors and comforts of the world like them. Then he would be able to show them in practical terms how to act and behave in similar situations. But, since he is an embodiment of, a personification of the supreme Brahm, he would not at all be affected and tarnished by this birth as a human.

He made himself so bewitchingly beautiful to ensure that the mortal creatures, who are so enamoured by physical beauty, would at least look up at him, pay attention to him, and keep looking at him so much so that in due course of time they begin to treat him as their idol of admiration and icon of worship. The whole exercise would have failed miserably if the Lord had assumed an ugly form that all loathed to see and to talk with, what to emulate and remember.]

अयं हि विश्वोद्भवसंयमानामेकः स्वमायागुणबिम्बितो यः।
विरिञ्चिविष्णवीश्वरनाम भेदान् धत्ते स्वतन्त्रः परिपूर्ण आत्मा।। 50।।

ayaṃ hi viśvodbhavasaṁyamānāmekaḥ svamāyāguṇabimbito yaḥ /
viriñcivisṇvīśvaranāmabhedān dhatte svatantraḥ paripūrṇa ātmā //

You are the independent, all-complete and self-sustained supreme Soul of creation (known as Brahm) which assumes different forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva with the help of its own stupendous powers of creation called Maya, along with its various virtues and qualities called 'Gunas', for the express purpose of creation, sustenance and dissolution of this creation respectively (50).

[Note—The concept of Maya and the Gunas have been described in a brief note of Baal Kand, Canto 3, verse no.22-23, in Aranya Kand, canto no. 3 and 4, as well as Appendix no.2 of this book.]

नमोऽस्तु ते राम तवाङ्घ्रिपङ्कजं श्रिया धृतं वक्षसि लालितं प्रियात्।
आक्रान्तमेकेन जगत्त्रयं पुरा ध्येयं मुनीन्द्रैरभिमानवर्जितैः।। 51।।

namo'stu te rāma tavāṅghripaṅkajaṃ
śriyā dhṛtaṃ vakṣasi lālitaṃ priyāt/

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ākrāntamekena jagattrayaṃ purā
dhyeyaṃ munīndrairabhimānavarjitaiḥ//

Oh Sri Ram! I bow and pay my obeisance to your holy lotus-feet which are affectionately served and adored by Laxmi by keeping them on her bosom, which had in an earlier time (during the dwarf mendicant incarnation to vanquish Vaali) measured the 3 worlds called the 'Triloki' (meaning the terrestrial, celestial and subterranean worlds) by a single step, and which are constantly meditated upon by wise and enlightened sages, hermits and seers (51).

जगतामादिभूतस्त्वं जगत्त्वं जगदाश्रयः। सर्वभूतेष्वसंयुक्त एको भाति भवान्परः।। 52।।
ओंकारवाच्यस्त्वं राम वाचामविषयः पुमान्। वाच्यवाचकभेदेन भवानेव जगन्मयः।। 53।।

jagatāmādibhūtastvaṃ jagattvaṃ jagadāśrayaḥ /
sarvabhūteṣvasaṁyukta eko bhāti bhavānparaḥ //
oṃkāravācyastvaṃ rāma vācāmaviṣayaḥ pumān /
vācyavācakabhedena bhavāneva jaganmayaḥ //

Oh Lord! You are the primordial cause of, the embodiment of, and the only shelter of the world. The entire creation made up of the 'Bhuts' (the primary elements of creation, such as earth, water, fire, air and space) is incorporated in your macrocosmic form. Inspite of that, you are distinct and independent from all the creatures, and are radiant with the divine glow of the matchless supreme Brahm of whom you are an embodiment (52).

Oh Sri Ram! You are the eternal and imperishable word represented by the divine word 'OM', and are the invisible, unmanifest supreme Purush (macrocosmic soul) which is beyond the purview of the faculty of speech (i.e. speech cannot define and describe you in any way). Even as the same word has many interpretations and uses, you too have assumed the form of this entire world depending upon how it is perceived. [That is, like the word having different meanings and usage, the same entity known as Brahm has been known in different ways by different persons. This has resulted in so much dichotomy and schisms in this world. But upon close examination one finds that the essence is the same and one even as the same word, when applied in different context, assumes a different meaning.] (53).

[Note :—For the concept of the word OM, see Uttar Kand, Canto 5,

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verse 51. it has been also explained in great detail in Appendix no.2 of this book.]

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वफलसाधनभेदतः। एको विभासि राम त्वं मायया बहुरूपया।। 54।।
त्वन्मायामोहितधियस्त्वां न जानन्ति तत्त्वतः। मानुषं त्वाभिमन्यन्ते मायिनं परमेश्वरम्।। 55।।

kāryakāraṇakartṛtvaphalasādhanabhedataḥ /
eko vibhāsi rāma tvaṃ māyayā bahurūpayā //
tvanmāyāmohitadhiyastvāṃ na jānanti tattvataḥ /
mānuṣaṃ tvābhimanyante māyinaṃ parameśvaram //

Oh Sri Ram! You yourself manifest (i.e. appear, reveal) in multifarious forms with the help (aid, use) of your multi-faceted, powerful, mystical and maverick powers called Maya, creating or doing various deeds, becoming reasons/causes for those duties/ imperatives/obligations, their results/rewards/fruits as well as resources/aids/instruments required to fulfill them or carry them out (54). Those people whose mind, intellect and discriminatory faculties are held in thrall by your deluding and magical powers can never realise (or come to know) their real, truthful nature and form. Those idiots and block-heads think that you—who are the Lord of all delusions and are the supreme Soul and Lord of creation—are an ordinary human being (55).

आकाशवत्त्वं सर्वत्र बहिरन्तर्गतोऽमलः। असङ्गो ह्यचलो नित्यः शुद्धो बुद्धः सदव्ययः।। 56।।
योषिन्मूढाहमज्ञा ते तत्त्वं जाने कथं विभो। तस्मात्ते शतशो राम नमस्कुर्यामनन्यधीः।। 57।।

ākāśavattvaṃ sarvatra bahirantargato'malaḥ /
asaṅgo hyacalo nityaḥ śuddho buddhaḥ sadavyayaḥ //
yoṣinmūḍhāhamajñā te tattvaṃ jāne kathaṃ vibho /
tasmātte śataśo rāma namaskuryāmananyadhīḥ //

You are present both inside and outside of everything like the space or sky that covers everything from the outside and is present inside it as well. You are pristine pure, immaculate, uncorrupt, and without any blemishes and faults. You are all alone, remain detached, dispassionate and disinterested in any thing associated with this illusionary world. You are unwavering, steadfast, stable, unmoving, constant and uniform. You are eternal, infinite, and without a beginning or an end. You are most pure and holy, are wise and acclaimed, are self-realised and an attained one. You are an

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embodiment, a personification, an image of truth. You are imperishable and unchanging (56). Oh Vibho (omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal, powerful one)! What do I know of, or how can I understand the essential form and nature of yours that is divine, transcendental, supreme, pure, ethereal, eclectic, sublime and esoteric, because I am an ignorant and a dud woman? Hence, Oh Sri Ram, I can only bow my head in reverence and adoration, to pay my humble obeisance and to worship you, hundreds of times with the highest and the most sincere of devotion, humility, dedication and submission for you that I can command (57).

देव मे यत्र कुत्रापि स्थिताया अपि सर्वदा। त्वत्पादकमले सक्ता भक्तिरेव सदास्तु मे।। 58।।
नमस्ते पुरुषाध्यक्ष नमस्ते भक्तवत्सल। नमस्तेऽस्तु हृषीकेश नारायण नमोऽस्तु ते।। 59।।

deva me yatra kutrāpi sthitāyā api sarvadā /
tvatpādakamale saktā bhaktireva sadāstu me //
namaste puruṣādhyakṣa namaste bhaktavatsala /
namaste'stu hṛṣīkeśa nārāyaṇa namo'stute //

Oh Lord! Wherever I stay, let me have eternal and sincere dedication, firm faith, steady admiration and unflinching devotion in your lotus-like feet (58). Oh the master or Lord of men! I bow before you. Oh the lover and benefactor of devotees! I bow my head before you with palms joined together in submission. Oh Hrishikesh (Vishnu)! I bow before you. Oh Narayan (Vishnu)! I bow my head repeatedly before you (59).

भवभयहरमेकं भानुकोटिप्रकाशं करधृतशरचापं कालमेघावभासम्।
कनकरुचिरवस्त्रं रत्नवत्कुण्डलाढ्यं कमल विशदनेत्रं सानुजं राममीडे।। 60।।

bhavabhayaharamekaṃ bhānukoṭiprakāśaṃ
karadhṛtaśaracāpaṃ kālameghāvabhāsam/
kanakaruciravastraṃ ratnavatkuṇḍalāḍhyaṃ
kamalaviśadanetraṃ sānujaṃ rāmamīḍe //

I sing the praises, honours and glories of Sri Ram– along with his younger brother Laxman—who is the only one to remove the fears of this world, is splendorous and brilliant like crores (millions) of suns, who bears a bow and an arrow in his lotus-like hands, has a dark radiant complexion that resembles the dark clouds that are rich with rain, is wearing a magnificent yellow garment (robe) which is coloured

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like gold, is adorned by ear-rings studded with jewels and gems, and who has beautiful, enchanting broad eyes which are like the petals of a lotus flower' (60).

स्तुत्वैवं पुरुषं साक्षाद्राघवं पुरतः स्थितम्। परिक्रम्य प्रणम्याशु सानुज्ञाता ययौ पतिम्।।61।।
अहल्यया कृतं स्तोत्रं यः पठेद्भक्तिसंयुतः। स मुच्यतेऽखिलैः पापैः परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति।।62।।

stutvaivaṃ puruṣaṃ sākṣādrāghavaṃ purataḥ sthitam /
parikramya praṇamyāśu sānujñātā yayau patim //
ahalyayā kṛtaṃ stotraṃ yaḥ paṭhedbhaktisaṁyutaḥ /
sa mucyate'khilaiḥ pāpaiḥ paraṃ brahmādhigacchati //

In this manner, she (Ahilya) sang the divine and holy glories, honours and praises of the supreme Purush (a reference to Lord Vishnu or the Viraat Purush) in the form of Raghav (Lord Ram) himself standing in front of her, went around him (circumambulated him), praised and honoured him, and then took his permission to go to her husband's (Gautam's) place (61). Those people who read this Stotra (sacred hymns sung in honour of the Lord God), composed and sung by Ahilya, shall be liberated (freed) from all their sins (and their effects) and attain the most exalted stature of oneness with the Lord (or attain emancipation and salvation of their souls) (62).

पुत्राद्यर्थे पठेद्भक्त्या रामं हृदि निधायं च। संवत्सरेण लभते वन्ध्या अपि सुपुत्रकम्।।63।।
सर्वान्कामानवाप्नोति रामचन्द्रप्रसादतः।।64।।

putrādyarthe paṭhedbhaktyā rāmaṃ hṛdi nidhāya ca /
saṁvatsareṇa labhate vandhyā api suputrakam //
sarvānkāmānavāpnoti rāmacandraprasādataḥ //

Even a barren woman who recites this hymn with due devotion, faith and conviction, with Sri Ram enshrined in her heart and with a desire to have a son, shall be blessed by an excellent son within a year. Besides it, all her desires can be fulfilled by the grace, benediction and munificence of Sri Ram (63-64).

ब्रह्मघ्नो गुरुतल्पगोऽपि पुरुषः स्तेयी सुरापोऽपि वा
मातृभ्रातृविहिंसकोऽपि सततं भोगैकबद्धातुरः।
नित्यं स्तोत्रमिदं जपन् रघुपतिं भक्त्या हृदिस्थं स्मरन्
ध्यायन्मुक्तिमुपैति किं पुनरसौ स्वाचारयुक्तो नरः।।65।।

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brahmaghno gurutalpago'pi puruṣaḥ steyī surāpo'pi vā
mātṛbhrātṛvihiṁsako'pi satataṃ bhogaikabaddhāturaḥ /
nityaṃ stotramidaṃ japan raghupatiṃ bhaktyā hṛdayasthaṃ smaran
dhyāyanmuktimupaiti kiṃ punarasau svācārayukto naraḥ //

Even they who are the slayers of Brahmins, have sexual relationship with the wife of their Guru (moral preceptor, teacher), are thieves, are drunkards, are cruel towards their parents and brothers, and are constantly engrossed in gratification of the sense organs and are indulgent in worldly pleasures, can have liberation from the shackles of this mundane world (i.e. achieve emancipation and salvation) by daily (constantly, persistently) remembering, concentrating, meditating and contemplating upon Lord Ram who resides in their hearts, as well as by reciting this devotional hymn sung by Ahilya. If this (salvation and emancipation) can be achieved by such (wicked, evil, pervert) persons, what to say of those who are righteous, noble and upright (i.e. there is no doubt or confusion about their emancipation and salvation) (65).

***

Baal Kand—Canto 6

The bow breaking ceremony and Sri Ram's marriage

सूत उवाच

विश्वामित्रोऽथ तं प्राह राघवं सहलक्ष्मणम्। गच्छमो वत्स मिथिलां जनकेनाभिपालिताम्।।1।।
दृष्ट्वा क्रतुवरं पश्चादयोध्यां गन्तुमर्हसि। इत्युक्त्वा प्रययौ गङ्गामुत्तर्तुं सहराघवः।
तस्मिन्काले नाविकेन निषिद्धो रघुनन्दनः।।2।।

sūta uvāca

viśvāmitro'tha taṃ prāha rāghavaṃ sahalakṣmaṇam /
gacchāmo vatsa mithilāṃ janakenābhipālitām //
dṛṣṭvā kratuvaraṃ paścādayodhyāṃ gantumarhasi /
ityuktvā prayayau gaṅgāmuttartuṃ saharāghavaḥ /
tasminkāle nāvikena niṣiddho raghunandanaḥ //

Sage Sut said—'Thereafter, sage Vishwamitra said to Raghav (Sri Ram) and Laxman, 'Sons, now we shall go visit the city of Mithila

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which is taken care of and sustained (i.e. ruled) by a king named Janak (1). After seeing the Yagya ceremony (a special religious sacrifice) performed by him, you can go back to Ayodhya'. Saying thus, he came to the banks of river Ganges to cross it, along with Sri Ram (and Laxman). There, the boatman stopped Raghunandan (Sri Ram) from setting foot on his boat (2).

नाविक उवाच

क्षालयामि तव पादपङ्कजं नाथ दारुदृषदोः किमन्तरम्।
मानुषीकरणचूर्णमस्ति ते पादयोरिति कथा प्रथीयसी।।3।।

nāvika uvāca

kṣālayāmi tava pādapaṅkajaṃ nātha dārudṛṣadoḥ kimantaram /
mānuṣīkaraṇacūrṇamasti te pādayoriti kathā prathīyasī //

The boatman said, 'Oh Lord! It is well known that your feet has some magical dust that can make (an inanimate object into) a human being. (Just recently, you had transformed a rock into a woman) What is the difference between a stone and wood (of which this boat is made of)? Hence, before you step in my boat, I will wash your feet (to ensure that my wooden boat is not turned into a lady) (3).

पादाम्बुजं ते विमलं हि कृत्वा पश्चात्परं तीरमहं नयामि।
नोचेत्तरी सद्युवती मलेन स्याच्चेद्विभो विद्धि कुटुम्बहानिः।।4।।

pādāmbujaṃ te vimalaṃ hi kṛtvā paścātparaṃ tīramahaṃ nayāmi /
nocettarī sadyuvatī malena syāccedvibho viddhi kuṭambahāniḥ //

In this way, after getting your feet cleansed (by washing off the dust from it), I shall take you across the river (Ganges). Otherwise, oh Lord, if the boat turns into a beautiful woman by the Midas touch of the dust of your feet, then the very livelihood of my family shall be snatched away from me' (4).

इत्युक्त्वा क्षालितौ पादौ परं तीरं ततो गताः। कौशिको रघुनाथेन सहितो मिथिलां ययौ।।5।।
विदेहस्य पुरं प्रातर्ऋषिवाटं समाविशत्। प्राप्तं कौशिकमाकर्ण्य जनकोऽतिमुदान्वितः।।6।।
पूजाद्रव्याणि सङ्गृह्य सोपाध्यायः समाययौ। दण्डवत्प्रणिपत्याथ पूजयामास कौशिकम्।।7।।

ityuktvā kṣālitau pādau paraṃ tīraṃ tato gatāḥ /
kauśiko raghunāthena sahito mithilāṃ yayau //
videhasya puraṃ prātarṛṣivāṭaṃ samāviśat /
prāptaṃ kauśikamākarṇya janako'timudānvitaḥ //

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pūjādravyāṇi saṅgṛhya sopādhyāyaḥ samāyayau /
daṇḍavatpraṇipatyātha pūjayāmāsa kauśikam //

Saying this, Kewat (the boatman) washed his feet and then took him across the river. From there, sage Vishwamitra, accompanied by Sri Ram and Laxman, proceeded to Mithilapuri (Janakpur). At the crack of dawn, they arrived at Videha Nagar (Janakpur) and halted at the place earmarked for ascetics, sages and hermits. At that time, hearing the news of the arrival of sage Vishwamitra, king Janak felt extremely delighted (6), and taking necessary items for worship and welcome, he came there along with his royal priest (Shatanand), prostrated before the most exalted sage Vishwamitra and honoured him (7).

पप्रच्छ राघवौ दृष्ट्वा सर्वलक्षणसंयुतौ। द्योतयन्तौ दिशः सर्वाश्चन्द्रसूर्याविवापरौ।।8।।
कस्यैतौ नरशार्दूलौ पुत्रौ देवसुतोपमौ। मनःप्रीतिकरौ मेऽद्य नरनारायणाविव।।9।।

papraccha rāghavau dṛṣṭvā sarvalakṣaṇasaṁyutau /
dyotayantau diśaḥ sarvāścandrasūryāvivāparau //
kasyaitau naraśārdūlau putrau devasutopamau /
manaḥprītikarau me'dya naranārāyaṇāviva //

Then seeing those two princes of Raghu's clan (Sri Ram and Laxman), who lighted-up (illuminated) all the directions with their radiant glow, with Sri Ram resembling a sun with its brilliance and splendour, and Laxman a full moon that was most magnificent and enchanting the king asked (8), 'Who are these to lions or tigers in a human form.[This is a metaphor to indicate the praise that king had shown to the princes; in other words the king meant to say 'who are these most brave, courageous and strong boys'.] They are like the sons of Gods? They kindle (ignite, arouse) great affection in my heart as if they were 'Nar' and 'Narayan'[1] themselves' (9).

[Note—[1]The word Nar means a male, while Narayan refers to Lord Vishnu. Here, king Janak means that both these brothers resemble the Lord and his counterpart, the man. Both are an image of each other; both are inseparable from each other. Lord Vishnu is colored like the sky, and so is Lord Ram, while a man is fair complexioned like Laxman.]

प्रत्युवाच मुनिः प्रीतो हर्षयन् जनकं तदा। पुत्रौ दशरथस्यैतौ भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ।।10।।
मखसंरक्षणार्थाय मयानीतौ पितुः पुरात्। आगच्छन् राघवो मार्गे ताटकां विश्वघातिनीम्।।11।।

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pratyuvāca muniḥ prīto harṣayan janakaṃ tadā /
putrau daśarathasyaitau bhrātarau rāmalakṣmaṇau //
makhasaṁrakṣaṇārthāya mayānītau pituḥ purāt /
āgacchan rāghavo mārge tāṭakāṃ viśvaghātinīm //

Then sage Vishwamitra made Janak feel delighted and exhilarated by saying, 'These two brothers, Sri Ram and Laxman, are the sons of Dashrath, the king of Kaushal (Ayodhya) (10). I have brought them from Ayodhya to protect my fire sacrifice (from being defiled by demons). While on the way, the most valorous and valiant Raghav (Sri Ram) has slayed Tadka, who was terrorising this world, by a single arrow at my instructions (11).

शरेणैकेन हतवान्नोदितो मेऽतिविक्रमः। ततो ममाश्रमं गत्वा मम यज्ञविहिंसकान्।। 12।।
सुबाहुप्रमुखान्हत्वा मारीचं सागरेऽक्षिपत्। ततो गङ्गातटे पुण्ये गौतमस्याश्रमं शुभम्।। 13।।
गत्वा तत्र शिलारूपा गौतमस्य वधूः स्थिता। पादपङ्कजसंस्पर्शात्कृता मानुषरूपिणी।। 14।।

śareṇaikena hatavānnodito me'tivikramaḥ /
tato mamāśramaṃ gatvā mama yajñavihiṁsakān //
subāhupramukhānhatvā mārīcaṃ sāgare'kṣipat /
tato gaṅgātaṭe puṇye gautamasyāśramaṃ śubham //
gatvā tatra śilārūpā gautamasya vadhūḥ sthitā /
pādapaṅkajasaṁsparśātkṛtā mānuṣarūpiṇī //

Thereafter, having reached my hermitage, he had killed Subahu and other demons who had been desecrating my fire sacrifice, and threw (flung) Marich far off into the ocean (hundreds of miles away). After that, he came to the holy and pure hermitage of the great sage Gautam on the banks of river Ganges (12-13). There he saw Gautam's wife in the form of a stone (rock) and turned her back into a divine form by merely touching her with his lotus-like feet (14).

दृष्ट्वाहल्यां नमस्कृत्य तया सम्यक्प्रपूजितः। इदानीं द्रष्टुकामस्ते गृहे माहेश्वरं धनुः।। 15।।
पूजितं राजभिः सर्वैर्दृष्टमित्यनुशुश्रुवे। अतो दर्शय राजेन्द्र शैवं चापमनुत्तमम्।
दृष्ट्वायोध्यां जिगमिषुः पितरं द्रष्टुमिच्छति।। 16।।

dṛṣṭvāhalyāṃ namaskṛtya tayā samyakprapūjitaḥ /
idānīṃ draṣṭakāmaste gṛhe māheśvaraṃ dhanuḥ //
pūjitaṃ rājabhiḥ sarvairdṛṣṭamityanuśuśruve /
ato darśaya rājendra śaivaṃ cāpamanuttamam /
dṛṣṭvāyodhyāṃ jigamiṣuḥ pitaraṃ draṣṭumicchati //

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Seeing Ahilya, he (Sri Ram) paid his respect to her (by bowing before her), and then accepted her offerings of worships and prayers. Presently, he has come here to have a look at Shiva's bow (15). I have heard that the bow is highly revered and worshipped at your place, and all the kings have already seen it. Therefore, oh king, show that bow of Lord Shiva to them (Sri Ram and Laxman) because they wish to return to their parents at Ayodhya soon after having seen it' (16).

इत्युक्तो मुनिना राजा पूजार्हावीति पूजया। पूजयामास धर्मज्ञो विधिदृष्टेन कर्मणा।। 17।।
ततः सम्प्रेषयामास मन्त्रिणं बुद्धिमत्तरम्।

जनक उवाच

शीघ्रमानय विश्वेशचापं रामाय दर्शय।। 18।।

ityukto muninā rājā pūjārhāviti pūjayā /
pūjayāmāsa dharmajño vidhidṛṣṭena karmaṇā //
tataḥ sampreṣayāmāsa mantriṇaṃ buddhimattaram /
janaka uvāca
śīghramānaya viśveśacāpaṃ rāmāya darśaya //

When sage Vishwamitra had said so, the most righteous king Janak duly honoured and worshipped Sri Ram and Laxman, considering (or regarding) them to be worthy of it (i.e. respect, adoration, worship, honour, reverence and obeisance, because what the sage had just narrated is not an ordinary thing to do, and only the divine Lord can achieve this magnificent astounding and stupendous feat) (17). Then he sent for his wise minister. Janak said, 'You should bring the bow of Vishweshwar (literally, the Lord of the universe, i.e. Lord Shiva) soon and show it to Sri Ram' (18).

ततो गते मन्त्रिवरे राजा कौशिकमब्रवीत्। यदि रामो धनुर्धृत्वा कोट्यामारोपयेद्गुणम्।। 19।।
तदा मयात्मजा सीता दीयते राघवाय हि। तथेति कौशिकोऽप्याह रामं संवीक्ष्य सस्मितम्।।20।।

tato gate mantrivare rājā kauśikamabravīt /
yadi rāmo dhanurdhṛtvā koṭyāmāropayedguṇam //
tadā mayātmajā sītā dīyate rāghavāya hi /
tatheti kauśiko'pyāha rāmaṃ saṁvīkṣya sasmitam //

When the minister had gone, the king said to Vishwamitra, 'If Sri Ram can lift the bow and string it (19), I will surely marry my daughter Sita to him'. Then sage Vishwamitra glanced at Sri Ram and smilingly replied, 'alright, so it be' (20).

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शीघ्रं दर्शय चापाग्र्यं रामायामिततेजसे। एवं ब्रुवति मौनीश आगताश्चापवाहकाः।।21।।
चापं गृहीत्वा बलिनः पञ्चसाहस्रसङ्ख्यकाः। घण्टाशतसमायुक्तं मणिवज्रादिभूषितम्।।22।।

śīghraṃ darśaya cāpāgryaṃ rāmāyāmitatejase /
evaṃ bruvati maunīśa āgatāścāpavāhakāḥ //
cāpaṃ gṛhītvā balinaḥ pañcasāhasrasaṅkhyakāḥ /
ghaṇṭāśatasamāyuktaṃ maṇivajrādibhūṣitam //

'Oh king! Show that excellent bow to Sri Ram, who has immense radiance, brilliance and glory, very soon'. As soon as the sage had said so, five thousand most strong carriers brought that excellent, huge bow there. Hundreds of bells were tied to it and it was decorated with diamonds, gems and other jewels (21-22).

दर्शयामास रामाय मन्त्री मन्त्रयतां वरः। दृष्ट्वा रामः प्रहृष्टात्मा बद्ध्वा परिकरं दृढम्।।23।।
गृहीत्वा वामहस्तेन लीलया तोलयन् धनुः। आरोपयामास गुणं पश्यत्स्वखिलराजसु।।24।।

darśayāmāsa rāmāya mantrī mantrayatāṃ varaḥ /
dṛṣṭvā rāmaḥ prahṛṣṭātmā baddhvā parikaraṃ dṛḍham //
gṛhītvā vāmahastena līlayā tolayan dhanuḥ /
āropayāmāsa guṇaṃ paśyatsvakhilarājasu //

Then the minister of Janak, who was the best amongst his advisers, showed Sri Ram that bow. As soon as he saw it, the cheerful Sri Ram got ready (literally, tied the waist cloth tightly around his waist as a gesture of readiness; or rolled up his sleeves) and firmly held the bow with his left hand as if it was merely a sport (or play), and then stringed it, even as all the assembled kings watched (23-24).

ईषदाकर्षयामास पाणिना दक्षिणेन सः। बभञ्जाखिलहृत्सारो दिशः शब्देन पूरयन्।।25।।
दिशश्च विदिशश्चैव स्वर्गं मर्त्यं रसातलम्। तदद्भुतमभूत्तत्र देवानां दिवि पश्यताम्।।26।।
आच्छादयन्तः कुसुमैर्देवाः स्तुतिभिरीडिरे। देवदुन्दुभयो नेदुर्ननृतुश्चाप्सरोगणाः।।27।।

īṣadākarṣayāmāsa pāṇinā dakṣiṇena saḥ /
babhañjākhilahṛtsāro diśaḥ śabdena pūrayan //
diśaśca vidiśaścaiva svargaṃ martyaṃ rasātalam /
tadadbhutamabhūttatra devānāṃ divi paśyatām //
ācchādayantaḥ kusumairdevāḥ stutibhirīḍire /
devadundubhayo nedurnanṛtuścāpsaroganāḥ //

Then he, who resides in and is most dear to the heart of all (i.e. Sri Ram), pulled that bow slightly with his right hand and broke it with a

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thunderous sound which reverberated (resonated, echoed) in all the ten directions of the world (25). This sound echoed in lands near and far, in the heavens, the earth and the subterranean worlds. For the Gods watching from their celestial abodes, this was like a very strange, mysterious and dramatic occurrence (26). The Gods covered him (Sri Ram) with a blanket of flowers falling in a torrent, sounded their trumpets and kettle-drums, and sang the glories and honours of the Lord, while celestial female dancers broke into a spontaneous dance (27).

द्विधा भग्नं धनुर्दृष्ट्वा राजालिङ्ग्य रघूद्वहम्। विस्मयं लेभिरे सीतामातरोऽन्तःपुराजिरे।। 28।।
सीता स्वर्णमयीं मालां गृहीत्वा दक्षिणे करे। स्मितवक्त्रा स्वर्णवर्णा सर्वाभरणभूषिता।।29।।
मुक्ताहारैः कर्णपत्रैः क्वणच्चरणनूपुरा। दुकूलपरिसंवीता वस्त्रान्तर्व्यञ्जितस्तनी।।30।।

dvidhā bhagnaṃ dhanurdṛṣṭvā rājāliṅgya raghūdvaham /
vismayaṃ lebhire sītāmātaro'ntaḥpurājire //
sītā svarṇamayīṃ mālāṃ gṛhītvā dakṣiṇe kare /
smitavaktrā svarṇavarṇā sarvābharaṇabhūṣitā //
muktāhāraiḥ karṇapatraiḥ kvaṇaccaraṇanūpurā /
dukūlaparisaṁvītā vastrāntarvyañjitastanī //

Seeing that the bow has been broken into two pieces, king Janak jubilantly embraced Sri Ram, while the mothers of Sita (i.e. the various queens of Janak's royal household), who were present in the palace courtyard, were extremely astonished at the event (28). After that, Sita, who was fully decked up in colourful bridal gear and who had a complexion resembling gold, came there with a cheerful, enchanting but a low-profile shy smile on her face[1]. She had a golden garland in her right hand (29). She was adorned by a pearl necklace, ear-rings, tinkling and jingling anklets and other ornaments, while her full bosoms were apparent behind the excellent 'Sari' (a body-wrapping seamless cloth worn by women in India) she wore (30).

रामस्योपरि निक्षिप्य स्मयमाना मुदं ययौ। ततो मुमुदिरे सर्वे राजदाराः स्वलङ्कृतम्।। 31।।
गवाक्षजालरन्ध्रेभ्यो दृष्ट्वा लोकविमोहनम्। ततोऽब्रवीन्मुनिं राजा सर्वशास्त्रविशारदः।।32।।

rāmasyopari nikṣipya smayamānā mudaṃ yayau /
tato mumudire sarve rājadārāḥ svalaṅkṛtam //
gavākṣajālarandhrebhyo dṛṣṭvā lokavimohanam /
tato'bravīnmuniṃ rājā sarvaśāstraviśāradaḥ //

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Smiling modestly, Sita put the garland on Sri Ram (i.e. around his neck) and felt glad and delighted at doing so. All the queens who watched that fully decorated and world-enchanting image of Sri Ram from the balconies and windows of the palace, felt extremely exhilarated at that moment. Then the king (Janak), who was an expert in all the Shastras (scriptures), said to sage Vishwamitra (31-32)—

भो कौशिक मुनिश्रेष्ठ पत्रं प्रेषय सत्वरम्। राजा दशरथः शीघ्रमागच्छतु सपुत्रकः।। 33।।
विवाहार्थं कुमाराणां सदारः सहमन्त्रिभिः। तथेति प्रेषयामास दूतांस्त्वरितविक्रमान्।।34।।

bho kauśika muniśreṣṭha patraṃ preṣaya satvaram/
rājā daśarathaḥ śīghramāgacchatu saputrakaḥ//
vivāhārthaṃ kumārāṇāṃ sadāraḥ sahamantribhiḥ/
tatheti preṣayāmāsa dūtāṁstvaritavikramān//

'Oh the most exalted sage Kaushik (Vishwamitra)! You should send a letter of invitation to king Dashrath immediately. He should come to attend the marriage ceremony of the princes accompanied by his other sons, queens and ministers'. Then Vishwamitra replied 'alright' and sent swift messengers with the errand (33-34).

ते गत्वा राजशार्दूलं रामश्रेयो न्यवेदयन्। श्रुत्वा रामकृतं राजा हर्षेण महताप्लुतः।।35।।
मिथिलागमनार्थाय त्वरयामास मन्त्रिणः। गच्छन्तु मिथिलां सर्वे गजाश्वरथपत्तयः।।36।।

te gatvā rājaśārdūlaṃ rāmaśreyo nyavedayan/
śrutvā rāmakṛtaṃ rājā harṣeṇa mahatāplutaḥ//
mithilāgamanārthāya tvarayāmāsa mantriṇaḥ/
gacchantu mithilāṃ sarve gajāśvarathapattayaḥ//

The messengers took the good tidings and went to the lion-among-kings, Dashrath, and told him about the well beings of Sri Ram. Hearing about the strange and marvelous deeds done by Sri Ram, the king was submerged in extreme joy and delightedness (35). Then showing eagerness to proceed to Janakpur at the earliest, he instructed his ministers—'Accompanied by elephants, horses, chariots and footmen, everyone should proceed to Mithila (Janakpur) post-haste (36).

रथमानय मे शीघ्रं गच्छाम्यद्यैव मा चिरम्। वसिष्ठस्त्वग्रतो यातु सदारः सहितोऽग्निभिः।। 37।।
राममातः समादाय मुनिर्मे भगवान् गुरुः। एवं प्रस्थाप्य सकलं राजर्षिर्विपुलं रथम्।। 38।।
महत्या सेनया सार्धमारुह्य त्वरितो ययौ। आगतं राघवं श्रुत्वा राजा हर्षसमाकुलः।। 39।।

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प्रत्युज्जगाम जनकः शतानन्दपुरोधसा। यथोक्तपूजया पूज्यं पूजयामास सत्कृतम्।। 40।।

rathamānaya me śīghraṃ gacchāmyadyaiva mā ciram /
vasiṣṭhastvagrato yātu sadāraḥ sahito'gnibhiḥ //
rāmamātaḥ samādāya munirme bhagavān guruḥ /
evaṃ prasthāpya sakalaṃ rājarṣirvipulaṃ ratham //
mahatyā senayā sārdhamāruhya tvarito yayau /
āgataṃ rāghavaṃ śrutvā rājā harṣasamākulaḥ //
pratyujjagāma janakaḥ śatānandapurodhasā /
yathoktapūjayā pūjyaṃ pūjayāmāsa satkṛtam //

Bring my chariot immediately too, don't delay; I shall embark on the journey today itself. Let my Guru Vashistha, who is the best among sages, accompanied by his wife Arundhati and the ritualistic (holy, religious) fires, proceed in the vanguard along with all the mothers of Sri Ram'. Having thus made every one proceed ahead of him, the exalted king (Dashrath) mounted a huge chariot and surrounded by the army, royal entourage and accompanied with pomp and pageantry, proceeded hurriedly towards Janakpur with great swiftness and agility. Hearing that Dashrath—who was like a Tilak (i.e. most prominent, exalted, famed, praise worthy) in Raghu's clan—has arrived, king Janak, accompanied by his priest Shatanand, joyfully went forward to receive him. He duly welcomed the praise worthy and honourable king (Dashrath) as per established traditions and worshipped him (37-40).

रामस्तु लक्ष्मणेनाशु ववन्दे चरणौ पितुः। ततो हृष्टो दशरथो रामं वचनमब्रवीत्।। 41।।
दिष्ट्या पश्यामि ते राम मुखं फुल्लाम्बुजोपमम्। मुनेरनुग्रहात्सर्वं सम्पन्नं मम शोभनम्।।42।।

rāmastu lakṣmaṇenāśu vavande caraṇau pituḥ /
tato hṛṣṭo daśaratho rāmaṃ vacanamabravīt //
diṣṭyā paśyāmi te rāma mukhaṃ phullāmbujopamam /
muneranugrahātsarvaṃ sampannaṃ mama śobhanam //

Thereafter, Sri Ram, along with Laxman, bowed at the feet of his father. Feeling extremely privileged and exhilarated, Dashrath said to him (41), 'Oh Ram! It is very fortunate today that I am seeing your face which resembles a fully blooming lotus flower. By the grace and kindness of the honourable sage (Vishwamitra), I have been blessed with welfares and fortunes in every respect' (42).

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इत्युक्त्वाघ्राय मूर्धानमालिङ्ग्य च पुनः पुनः। हर्षेण महताविष्टो ब्रह्मानन्दं गतो यथा।। 43।।
ततो जनकराजेन मन्दिरे सन्निवेशितः। शोभने सर्वभोगाढ्ये सदारः ससुतः सुखी।। 44।।

ityuktvāghrāya mūrdhānamāliṅgya ca punaḥ punaḥ /
harṣeṇa mahatāviṣṭo brahmānandaṃ gato yathā //
tato janakarājena mandire sanniveśitaḥ /
śobhane sarvabhogāḍhye sadāraḥ sasutaḥ sukhī //

Saying this, he (Dashrath) repeatedly embraced him (clasped him to his bosom or heart), smelt his head (as a gesture of affection and love) and was subsequently drowned (submerged) in extreme bliss due to the exhilaration and happiness provided by the occasion (43). After that, Janak gave him, along with all other queens and princes, a befitting residence in a very beautiful and comfortable palace provided with all the materials and paraphernalia of worldly comforts (44).

ततः शुभे दिन लग्ने सुमुहूर्ते रघूत्तमम्। आनयामास धर्मज्ञो रामं सभ्रातृकं तदा।। 45।।
रत्नस्तम्भसुविस्तारे सुविताने सुतोरणे। मण्डपे सर्वशोभाढ्ये मुक्तापुष्पफलान्विते।। 46।।
वेदविद्भिः सुसम्बाधे ब्राह्मणैः स्वर्णभूषितैः। सुवासनीभिः परितो निष्ककण्ठीभिरावृते।।47।।
भेरीदुन्दुभिनिर्घोषैर्गीतनृत्यैः समाकुले। दिव्यरत्नाञ्चिते स्वर्णपीठे रामं न्यवेशयत्।। 48।।

tataḥ śubhe dine lagne sumuhūrte raghūttamam /
ānayāmāsa dharmajño rāmaṃ sabhrātṛkaṃ tadā //
ratnastambhasuvistāre suvitāne sutoraṇe /
maṇḍape sarvaśobhāḍhye muktāpuṣpaphalānvite //
vedavidbhiḥ susambādhe brāhmaṇaiḥ svarṇabhūṣitaiḥ /
suvāsanībhiḥ parito niṣkakaṇṭhībhirāvṛte //
bherīdundubhinirghoṣairgītanṛtyaiḥ samākule /
divyaratnāñcite svarṇapīṭhe rāmaṃ nyaveśayat //

Then, when the day, time and Lagna (a special configuration of stars) were all auspicious and most favourable for the occasion, the most righteous king Janak called Sri Ram along with his other brothers (45). Then, in a large pavilion—which was endowed (provided) with all the possible magnificence and majesty, pomp and pageantry, grandeur and awe inspiring charm, which had fascinating gem-studded pillars, beautiful canopy, attractive and charming buntings, festoons, arches and gates, which was decorated with fruits and flowers made of pearls, and which was jam-packed with gold-bedecked Brahmins and was full of chaste women attired in beautiful

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attires—Sri Ram was made to sit on a grand and divinely radiant, gem-studded throne by king Janak. At that moment, there was a tumultuous clamour and din created by various musical instruments such as trumpets and kettle drums, as well as by various dances and felicitous songs and praises being sung to celebrate the occasion (46-48).

वसिष्ठं कौशिकं चैव शतानन्दः पुरोहितः। यथाक्रमं पूजयित्वा रामस्योभयपार्श्वयोः।। 49।।
स्थापयित्वा स तत्राग्निं ज्वालयित्वा यथाविधि। सीतामानीय शोभाढ्यां नानारत्नविभूषिताम्।।50।।
सभार्यो जनकः प्रायाद्रामं राजीवलोचनम्। पादौ प्रक्षाल्य विधिवत्तदपो मूर्ध्न्यधारयत्।।51।।

vasiṣṭhaṃ kauśikaṃ caiva śatānandaḥ purohitaḥ /
yathākramaṃ pūjayitvā rāmasyobhayapārśvayoḥ //
sthāpayitvā sa tatrāgniṃ jvālayitvā yathāvidhi /
sītāmānīya śobhāḍhyāṃ nānāratnavibhūṣitām //
sabhāryo janakaḥ prāyādrāmaṃ rājīvalocanam /
pādau prakṣālya vidhivattadapo mūrdhnyadhārayat //

The high priest Shatanand worshipped sage Vashistha and Vishwamitra one by one and seated them on either side of Sri Ram (49). The holy fire was ceremoniously kindled according to established traditions, and bringing along Sita—who was decorated with different varieties of jewels—as well as the queens, king Janak approached the lotus-eyed Sri Ram, washed his feet devotionally as per sanctioned procedure, and then put the washed water on his own head (50-51).

या धृता मूर्ध्नि शर्वेण ब्रह्मणा मुनिभिः सदा। ततः सीतां करे धृत्वा साक्षतोदकपूर्वकम्।। 52।।
रामाय प्रददौ प्रीत्या पाणिग्रहविधानतः। सीता कमलपत्राक्षी स्वर्णमुक्तादिभूषिता।। 53।।

yā dhṛtā mūrdhni śarveṇa brahmaṇā munibhiḥ sadā /
tataḥ sītāṃ kare dhṛtvā sākṣatodakapūrvakam //
rāmāya pradadau prītyā pāṇigrahavidhānataḥ /
sītā kamalapatrākṣī svarṇamuktādibhūṣitā //

This water (used to wash Sri Ram's feet) is so holy that it is always kept on the head (as a gesture of deep reverence, honour and respect) even by Lord Shiva, Brahma and other sages and seers. Thereafter, he held the hands of Sita, performed the holy ritual of offering her formally in marriage to Sri Ram, and handed her over most affectionately, brimming over with joy and happiness, to him (52-53).

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दीयते मे सुता तुभ्यं प्रीतो भव रघूत्तम। इति प्रीतेन मनसा सीतां रामकरेऽर्पयन्।। 54।।
मुमोद जनको लक्ष्मीं क्षीराब्धिरिव विष्णवे। उर्मिलां चौरसीं कन्यां लक्ष्मणाय ददौ मुदा।।55।।

dīyate me sutā tubhyaṃ prīto bhava raghūttama /
iti prītena manasā sītāṃ rāmakare'rpayan //
mumoda janako lakṣmīṃ kṣīrābdhiriva viṣṇave /
urmilāṃ caurasīṃ kanyāṃ lakṣmaṇāya dadau mudā //

Then he said, 'Oh the best one in the clan of Raghu! I am offering (or giving charge of, handing over) gold and pearl bedecked, lotus-eyed daughter of mine named Sita to you. Be happy and joyful (and accept her cheerfully and gladly)'. In this way, having offered Sita in the lotus-like hands of Sri Ram with an exhilarated mind and heart (54), Janak was as overwhelmed in bliss and ecstasy as the ocean of milk had been after having offered Laxmi in the lotus-like hands of Lord Vishnu (at the time of the legendary churning of the ocean). Thereafter, he married off his daughter Urmila, who was born out of his wedlock (i.e. from his wife), to Laxman (55).

[Note :—Sita was not born from his wife, Sunaina. As per legend, she was found in a pitcher while Janak was ploughing the fields to ceremoniously prepare the ground for a fire sacrifice which he was to do. See verse no.58-60.]

तथैव श्रुतकीर्तिं च माण्डवीं भ्रातृकन्यके। भरताय ददावेकां शत्रुघ्नायापरां ददौ।। 56।।
चत्वारो दारसम्पन्ना भ्रातरः शुभलक्षणाः। विरेजुः प्रभया सर्वे लोकपाला इवापरे।। 57।।

tathaiva śrutakīrtiṃ ca māṇḍavīṃ bhrātṛkanyake /
bharatāya dadāvekāṃ śatrughnāyāparāṃ dadau //
catvāro dārasampannā bhrātaraḥ śubhalakṣaṇāḥ /
virejuḥ prabhayā sarve lokapālā ivāpare //

At the same time, he gave the daughters of his brother, who were named Mandavi and Srut Kirti, to Bharat and Shatrughan respectively (56). As a result, all the four brothers—who were endowed with all the good characters and virtues—looked magnificent and glowed with their own radiance as in they were duplicate or parallel Lokpals (custodians of the four directions of the world) (57).

ततोऽब्रवीद्वसिष्ठाय विश्वामित्राय मैथिलः। जनकः स्वसुतोदन्तं नारदेनाभिभाषितम्।। 58।।
यज्ञभूमिविशुद्ध्यर्थं कर्षतो लाङ्गलेन मे। सीतामुखात्समुत्पन्ना कन्यका शुभलक्षणा।।59।।
तामद्राक्षमहं प्रीत्या पुत्रिकाभावभाविताम्। अर्पिता प्रियभार्यायै शरच्चन्द्रनिभानना।।60।।

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tato'bravīdvasiṣṭhāya viśvāmitrāya maithilaḥ /
janakaḥ svasutodantaṃ nāradenābhibhāṣitam //
yajñabhūmiviśuddhyarthaṃ karṣato lāṅgalena me /
sītāmukhātsamutpannā kanyakā śubhalakṣaṇā //
tāmadrākṣamahaṃ prītyā putrikābhāvabhāvitām /
arpitā priyabhāryāyai śaraccandranibhānanā //

After that, the Lord of Mithila, king Janak told sages Vashistha and Vishwamitra all that was disclosed to him previously about his daughter Sita by sage Narad (58). He said, 'Once, I was ploughing the field to purify it (or sanctify it) by doing penances for the purpose of performing a fire sacrifice. At that time, this auspicious and virtuous girl was produced (or emerged) from the front part of my plough. [Hence she was named Sita, literally meaning 'the front tip of the plough'] (59). When I saw her, a natural daughter-like affection arose in my heart for her, and so I brought and handed over that moon-faced infant girl to my wife (Sunaina) (60).

एकदा नारदोऽभ्यागाद्विविक्ते मयि संस्थिते। रणयन्महतीं वीणां गायन्नारायणं विभुम्।।61।।
पूजितः सुखमासीनो मामुवाच सुखान्वितः। शृणुष्व वचनं गुह्यं तवाभ्युदयकारणम्।।62।।

ekadā nārado'bhyāgādvivikte mayi saṁsthite /
raṇayanmahatīm vīṇāṃ gāyannārāyaṇaṃ vibhum //
pūjitaḥ sukhamāsīno māmuvāca sukhānvitaḥ /
śṛṇuṣva vacanaṃ guhyaṃ tavābhyudayakāraṇam //

Once, when I was sitting alone, sage Narad came to me playing his Indian lute called 'Mahati' and singing the glories of Lord Narayan who is all pervading and omnipresent (61). After I had finished with the formality of welcoming and worshipping the sage, he sat down comfortably and said cheerfully, 'Oh King! Listen to this most secret clue to your welfare and auspiciousness (62).

परमात्मा हृषीकेशो भक्तानुग्रहकाम्यया। देवकार्यार्थसिद्ध्यर्थं रावणस्य वधाय च।।63।।
जातो राम इति ख्यातो मायामानुषवेषधृक्। आस्ते दाशरथिर्भूत्वा चतुर्धा परमेश्वरः।।64।।

paramātmā hṛṣīkeśo bhaktānugrahakāmyayā /
devakāryārthasiddhyarthaṃ rāvaṇasya vadhāya ca //
jāto rāma iti khyāto māyāmānuṣaveṣadhṛk/
āste dāśarathirbhūtvā caturdhā parameśvaraḥ //

Lord Vishnu (Hrishikesh) has incarnated (revealed) himself and

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has become famous in an illusionary human form known by the name of 'Ram' for the benefit of and to show munificence and benevolence on his devotees, to fulfill the wish of the Gods and to slay the demon Ravana. That supreme Lord has manifested himself in four forms as sons of Dashrath and presently resides in the city of Ayodhya (63-64).

योगमायापि सीतेति जाता वै तव वेश्मनि। अतस्त्वं राघवायैव देहि सीतां प्रयत्नतः।। 65।।
नान्येभ्यः पूर्वभार्यैषा रामस्य परमात्मनः। इत्युक्त्वा प्रययौ देवगतिं देवमुनिस्तदा।। 66।।

yogamāyāpi sīteti jātā vai tava veśmani /
atastvaṃ rāghavāyaiva dehi sītāṃ prayatnataḥ //
nānyebhyaḥ pūrvabhāryaiṣā rāmasya paramātmanaḥ /
ityuktvā prayayau devagatiṃ devamunistadā //

Here, his delusion creating powers and infinite cosmic energy which is constructive and destructive at the same time depending upon what the Lord wants, called 'Yog Maya', has manifested in your household as Sita. Hence, you should attempt to betrothal Sita to Sri Ram and nobody else (i.e. you should endeavour to bring a union between the supreme Lord and his Maya)—because she has been his other half earlier also'. Saying this, the celestial sage Narad went away by the path of the sky (i.e. the celestial path leading to heaven) (65-66).

तदारभ्य मया सीता विष्णोर्लक्ष्मीर्विभाव्यते। कथं मया राघवाय दीयते जानकी शुभा।। 67।।
इति चिन्तासमाविष्टः कार्यमेकमचिन्तयम्। मत्पितामहगेहे तु न्यासभूतमिदं धनुः।। 68।।

tadārabhya mayā sītā viṣṇorlakṣmīrvibhāvyate /
kathaṃ mayā rāghavāya dīyate jānakī śubhā //
iti cintāsamāviṣṭaḥ kāryamekamacintayam /
matpitāmahagehe tu nyāsabhūtamidaṃ dhanuḥ //

Ever since then, I have regarded this Sita as the consort of Lord Vishnu. Reflecting on how to give this auspicious and virtuous Janki (Sita) to Raghav (Sri Ram), I thought of a way out (67). In an earlier time, Lord Shiva had, after having reduced to ashes the demon Tripurasur, deposited this bow with my grandfather (for safe custody) (68).

ईश्वरेण पुरा क्षिप्तं पुरदाहादनन्तरम्। धनुरेतत्पणं कार्यमिति चिन्त्य कृतं तथा।। 69।।
सीतापाणिग्रहार्थाय सर्वेषां माननाशनम्। त्वत्प्रसादान्मुनिश्रेष्ठ रामो राजीवलोचनः।। 70।।

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īśvareṇa purā kṣiptaṃ puradāhādanantaram /
dhanuretatpaṇaṃ kāryamiti cintya kṛtaṃ tathā //
sītāpāṇigrahārthāya sarveṣāṃ mānanāśanam /
tvatprasādānmuniśreṣtha rāmo rājīvalocanaḥ //

Inspired that I should make this bow—which is a vanquisher of haughtiness, pride, vanity and ego of all—as a bet (or condition) for marrying Sita, I went ahead and decided to implement it. Oh the most exalted sage (Vishwamitra)! By your grace, the lotus-eyed Sri Ram has come here to see that bow of Lord Shiva (70).

आगतोऽत्र धनुर्द्रष्टुं फलितो मे मनोरथः। अद्य मे सफलं जन्म राम त्वां सह सीतया।। 71।।
एकासनस्थं पश्यामि भ्राजमानं रविं यथा। त्वत्पादाम्बुधरो ब्रह्मा सृष्टिचक्रप्रवर्तकः।।72।।

āgato'tra dhanurdraṣṭuṃ phalito me manorathaḥ /
adya me saphalaṃ janma rāma tvāṃ saha sītayā //
ekāsanasthaṃ paśyāmi bhrājamānaṃ raviṃ yathā /
tvatpādāmbudharo brahmā sṛṣṭicakrapravartakaḥ //

This has resulted in my vows being honoured (i.e. all my efforts have borne fruits)'. [Turning to Lord Ram, he said—] 'Oh Sri Ram! Today my life has been fully rewarded (and I am feeling extremely privileged) that I behold you—who are as splendorous and radiant as the sun—and Sita seated together on the same throne. Brahma had embarked on (the project of) creating this universe (existence, creation) after having first put the holy water used to wash your divine feet on his head (as a mark of greatest of reverence, honour and obeisance as well as empowerment) (71-72).

बलिस्त्वत्पादसलिलं धृत्वाभूद्दिविजाधिपः। त्वत्पादपांसुसंस्पर्शादहल्या भर्तृशापतः।। 73।।
सद्य एव विनिर्मुक्ता कोऽन्यस्त्वत्तोऽधिरक्षिता।। 74।।

balistvatpādasalilaṃ dhṛtvābhūddivijādhipaḥ /
tvatpādapāṁsusṁsparśādahalyā bhartṛśāpataḥ //
sadya eva vinirmuktā ko'nyastvatto'dhirakṣitā //

By the glory and potential effect of the water used to wash your holy feet, Vaali had obtained the honour and stature equivalent to that of Indra (the king of Gods), and it was the touch of the dust of your holy feet which instantly liberated Ahilya from the curse cast upon her by her husband (Gautam). Who else is a greater protector and benefactor than you are? (73-74).

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यत्पादपङ्कजपरागसुरागयोगिवृन्दैर्जितं भवभयं जितकालचक्रैः।
यन्नामकीर्तनपरा जितदुःखशोका देवास्तमेव शरणं सततं प्रपद्ये।। 75।।

yatpādapaṅkajaparāgasurāgayogivṛndairjitaṃ
bhavabhayaṃ jitakālacakraiḥ /
yannāmakīrtanaparā jitaduḥkhaśokā devāstameva
śaraṇaṃ satataṃ prapadye //

I constantly, abidingly and permanently bow before and accept your refuge (shelter)—the admiration, intoxication and enchantment of the nectar of whose lotus-like feet has enabled Yogis (ascetics), who have already conquered the 'Kal Chakra' (the vicious, endless cycle of birth and death), to also vanquish the fear of this deluding, mundane world, while the Gods obtain victory over sorrows, distress, anguish and gloom of all kinds by being engrossed (or constantly involved) in reciting, chanting, singing and reflecting upon the glories of your holy name' (75).

इति स्तुत्वा नृपः प्रादाद्राघवाय महात्मने। दीनाराणां कोटिशतं रथानामयुतं तदा।। 76।।
अश्वानां नियुतं प्रादाद्गजानां षट्शतं तथा। पत्तीनां लक्षमेकं तु दासीनां त्रिशतं ददौ।। 77।।

iti stutvā nṛpaḥ prādādrāghavāya mahātmane /
dīnārāṇāṃ koṭiśataṃ rathānāmayutaṃ tadā //
aśvānāṃ niyutaṃ prādādgajānāṃ ṣaṭśataṃ tathā /
pattīnāṃ lakṣamekaṃ tu dāsīnāṃ triśataṃ dadau //

Having thus lauded and sung Sri Ram's glories and praises, the king (Janak) gave him, as dowry, 100 crore [1 crore = 10 million] gold sovereigns, 10 thousand chariots, 10 lakh [1lakh = 1 million] horses, 6 hundred elephants, 1 lakh footmen (infantry; foot soldiers; servants), and 3 hundred maid servants (76-77).

दिव्याम्बराणि हारांश्च मुक्तारत्नमयोज्ज्वलान्। सीतायै जनकः प्रादात्प्रीत्या दुहितृवत्सलः।। 78।।
वसिष्ठादीन्सुसंपूज्य भरतं लक्ष्मणं तथा। पूजयित्वा यथान्यायं तथा दशरथं नृपम्।। 79।।
प्रस्थापयामास नृपो राजानं रघुसत्तमम्। सीतामालिङ्ग्य रुदतीं मातरः साश्रुलोचनाः।। 80।।

divyāmbarāṇi hārāṁśca muktāratnamayojjvalān /
sītāyai janakaḥ prādātprītyā duhitṛvatsalaḥ //
vasiṣṭhādīnsusaṁpūjya bharataṃ lakṣmaṇaṃ tathā /
pūjayitvā yathānyāyaṃ tathā daśarathaṃ nṛpan //

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prasthāpayāmāsa nṛpo rājānaṃ raghusattamam /
sītāmāliṅgya rudatīṃ mātaraḥ sāśrulocanāḥ //

Besides the above, the affectionate father gave his daughter Sita, with great love and full of fatherly emotions, many marvelous, magnificent and majestic clothes and different types of wearing apparels, as well as bright, glittering and dazzling garlands and necklaces studded with pearls, gems and jewels (78).

Then he worshipped and honoured sage Vashistha. After that, he duly honoured Bharat, Laxman, Shatrughan and king Dashrath by offerings of wealth and various gifts, and then bade farewell to the most exalted king Dashrath of Raghu's clan. The mothers clasped the weeping Sita to their bosoms, and advised her (79-80)—

श्वश्रूशुश्रूषणपरा नित्यं राममनुव्रता। पातिव्रत्यमुपालम्ब्य तिष्ठ वत्से यथासुखम्।। 81।।

śvaśrūśuśrūṣaṇaparā nityaṃ rāmamanuvratā /
pātivratyamupālambya tiṣṭha vatse yathāsukham //

'Oh dear daughter! Be blessed! You must constantly and vigilantly serve your mothers-in-law, diligently follow Sri Ram, rely on the edicts, tenets and sanctified code of behaviour or conduct for a chaste and loyal wife (Pativrat Dharma), and live contentedly and happily' (81).

प्रयाणकाले रघुनन्दनस्य भेरीमृदङ्गानकतूर्यघोषः।
स्वर्वासिभेरीघनतूर्यशब्दैः संमूर्च्छितो भूतभयङ्करोऽभूत्।। 82।।

prayāṇakāle raghunandanasya bherīmṛdaṅgānakatūryaghoṣaḥ /
svarvāsibherīghanatūryaśabdaiḥ saṁmūrcchito bhūtabhayaṅkaro'bhūt //

At the time of Sri Ram's (i.e. the marriage party's) departure, there was a tumultuous, thunderous cacophony of musical instruments such as kettle-drums, tumbrels, drums and bugles being played on the earth as well as of trumpets, cymbals, bugles etc. in the sky by the Gods, so much so that this din created fear among all the creatures (82).

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Baal Kand — Canto 7

Parashuram's episode

सूत उवाच

अथ गच्छति श्रीरामे मैथिलाद्योजनत्रयम्। निमित्तान्यतिघोराणि ददर्श नृपसत्तमः।।1।।
नत्वा वसिष्ठं पप्रच्छ किमिदं मुनिपुङ्गव। निमित्तानीह दृश्यन्ते विषमाणि समन्ततः।।2।।

sūta uvāca

atha gacchati śrīrāme maithilādyojanatrayam /
nimittānyatighorāṇi dadarśa nṛpasattamaḥ //
natvā vasiṣṭhaṃ papraccha kimidaṃ munipuṅgava /
nimittānīha dṛśyante viṣmāṇi samantataḥ //

Sage Sut said—'After about three Yojans [1 Yojan = 4, 8 or 16 miles according to different scales or schools of measurement; the most usual being a distance of 8 miles] from Mithila, the exalted king Dashrath saw severe inauspicious, horrible and frightening signs (1). He then bowed his head to sage Vashistha and enquired of him, 'Oh the most exalted sage! What is the reason that these terrible and bad omens and signs are being observed in all the directions?' (2).

वसिष्ठस्तमथ प्राह भयमागामि सूच्यते। पुनरप्यभयं तेऽद्य शीघ्रमेव भविष्यति।।3।।
मृगाः प्रदक्षिणं यान्ति पश्य त्वां शुभसूचकाः। इत्येवं वदतस्तस्य ववौ घोरतरोऽनिलः।।4।।
मुष्णंश्चक्षूंषि सर्वेषां पांसुवृष्टिभिरर्दयन्। ततो व्रजन्ददर्शाग्रो तेजोराशिमुपस्थितम्।।5।।

vasiṣṭastamatha prāha bhayamāgāmi sūcyate /
punarapyabhayaṃ te'dya śīghrameva bhaviṣyati //
mṛgāḥ pradakṣiṇaṃ yānti paśya tvāṃ śubhasūcakāḥ /
ityevaṃ vadatastasya vavau ghorataro'nilaḥ //
muṣṇaṁścakṣūṁṣi sarveṣāṃ pāṁsuvṛṣṭibhirardayan /
tato vrajandadarśāgre tejorāśimupasthitam //

Sage Vashitha (deciphered the indications portended by the various omens and) said, 'These bad omens are indicative of some very fearful event in the near future, but (simultaneously they also indicate that) soon thereafter there will be fearlessness (3), because look, auspicious animals (deer) which are heralds of good tidings, auspiciousness and welfares are going towards (i.e. moving about) your right-hand side'. No sooner had Vashistha said this than a very

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fierce wind started blowing (as if a storm was fast approaching) (4). So much dust was raised that everyone became blinded. Proceeding ahead, the party saw a radiantly illuminated icon standing in front of them (5).

कोटिसूर्यप्रतीकाशं विद्युत्पुञ्जसमप्रभम्। तेजोराशिं ददर्शाथ जामदग्नयं प्रतापवान्।।6।।
नीलमेघनिभं प्रांशुं जटामण्डलमण्डितम्। धनुःपरशुपाणिं च साक्षात्कालमिवान्तकम्।।7।।
कार्तवीर्यान्तकं रामं दृप्तक्षत्रियमर्दनम्। प्राप्तं दशरथस्याग्रे कालमृत्युमिवापरम्।।8।।

koṭisūryapratīkāśaṃ vidyutpuñjasamaprabham /
tejorāśiṃ dadarśātha jāmadagnyaṃ pratāpavān //
nīlameghanibhaṃ prāṁśuṃ jaṭāmaṇḍalamaṇḍitam /
dhanuḥ paraśupāṇiṃ ca sākṣātkālamivāntakam //
kārtavīryāntakaṃ rāmaṃ dṛptakṣatriyamardanam /
prāptaṃ daśarathasyāgre kālamṛtyumivāparam //

Then they saw sage Parashuram coming towards them. He was as splendorous as crores (millions) of suns, dazzling and brilliant as a source (point) of electric, most victorious, famous and valorous, a treasury of radiance and splendour, had a hue resembling that of blue clouds, had a huge and colossus body, a crown of matted hairs, held a bow and an axe in his hands, and resembled Kaal (death), who is famed as a destroyer of all creatures, personified himself. (6-7). They saw that Parsahuram—who was the slayer of 'Kartavirya' and was the vanquisher of the haughtiness and pride of the arrogant and haughty Kshatriya clan, and who was like a parallel (or duplicate) Yam (the God of death)—was standing angrily in front of Dashrath (8).

तं दृष्ट्वा भयसन्त्रस्तो राजा दशरथस्तदा। अर्घ्यादिपूजां विस्मृत्य त्राहि त्राहीति चाब्रतीत्।।9।।
दण्डवत्प्रणिपत्याह पुत्रप्राणं प्रयच्छ मे। इति ब्रुवन्तं राजानमनादृत्य रघूत्तमम्।।10।।
उवाच निष्ठुरं वाक्यं क्रोधात्प्रचलितेन्द्रियः। त्वं राम इति नाम्ना मे चरसि क्षत्रियाधम।।11।।

taṃ dṛṣṭvā bhayasantrasto rājā daśarathastadā /
arghyādipūjāṃ vismṛtya trāhi trāhīti cābravīt //
daṇḍavatpraṇipatyāha putraprāṇaṃ prayaccha me /
iti bruvantaṃ rājānamanādṛtya raghūttamam //
uvāca niṣṭhuraṃ vākyaṃ krodhātpracalitendriyaḥ /
tvaṃ rāma iti nāmnā me carasi kṣatriyādhama //

At that moment, king Dashrath became so scared that he even

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forgot to formally worship, honour and welcome him, and instead pleaded for mercy—'Save me, have mercy on me', he cried (9). He prostrated before him and beseeched, 'Give me the alms (blessing) of my son's life (i.e. spare the life of my son)'. He (Parashuram) paid no attention to the pleadings of Dashrath, and seething with anger, he addressed the best in Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) in a stern and wrathful voice (10), 'Oh the most lowly and wicked Kshatriya! You have become as famous as my name 'Ram' and move about unhindered and unchallenged on this earth (11).

द्वन्द्वयुद्धं प्रयच्छाशु यदि त्वं क्षत्रियोऽसि वै। पुराणं जर्जरं चापं भङ्क्त्वा त्वं कत्थसे मुधा।। 12।।
अस्मिंस्तु वैष्णवे चाप आरोपयसि चेद्गुणम्। तदा युद्धं त्वया सार्धं करोमि रघुवंशज।। 13।।
नो चेत्सर्वान्हनिष्यामि क्षत्रियान्तकरो ह्यहम्। इति ब्रुवति वै तस्मिंश्चचाल वसुधा भृशम्।। 14।।

dvandvayuddhaṃ prayacchāśu yadi tvaṃ kṣatriyo'si vai /
purāṇaṃ jarjaraṃ cāpaṃ bhaṅktvā tvaṃ kathyase mudhā //
asmiṁstu vaiṣṇave cāpa āropayasi cedguṇam /
tadā yuddhaṃ tvayā sārdhaṃ karomi raghuvaṁśaja //
no cetsarvānhaniṣyāmi kṣatriyāntakaro hyaham /
iti bruvati vai tasmiṁścāla vasudhā bhṛśam //

So if you are a true Kshatriya, have a one-on-one duel with me—you are getting yourself falsely praised by breaking a worn out, rusted, decrepit, old and decayed bow (12). Oh the one who has taken birth in the clan of Raghu! If you dare to string this 'Vaishnav bow' (the bow of Lord Vishnu), I shall fight a duel with you (13). Otherwise, I shall immediately kill you all because it is my wont (vow, determination, habit, temperament, inclination) to slay the Kshatriya (the warrior class) on this earth'. The earth repeatedly shook at these horrifying and shocking words of Parashuram (14).

अन्धकारो बभूवाथ सर्वेषामपि चक्षुषाम्। रामो दाशरथिर्वीरो वीक्ष्य तं भार्गवं रुषा।। 15।।
धनुराच्छिद्य तद्धस्तादारोप्य गुणमञ्जसा। तूणीराद्बाणमादाय संधायाकृष्य वीर्यवान्।। 16।।
उवाच भार्गवं रामं शृणु ब्रह्मन्वचो मम। लक्ष्यं दर्शय बाणस्य ह्यमोघो मम सायकः।। 17।।

andhakāro babhūvātha sarveṣāmapi cakṣuṣām /
rāmo dāśarathirvīro vīkṣya taṃ bhārgavaṃ ruṣā //
dhanurācchidya taddhastādātopya guṇamañjasā /
tūṇīrādbāṇamādāya saṁdhāyākṛṣya vīryavān //

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uvāca bhārgavaṃ rāmaṃ śṛṇu brahmanvaco mama /
lakṣyaṃ darśaya bāṇasya hyamogho mama sāyakaḥ //

Darkness (danger) loomed in front of everyone's eyes. The brave son of Dashrath, Sri Ram, looked fiercely and sternly at Parashuram, snatched the said Vaishnav bow from his hand, stringed it casually without any effort, pulled an arrow from his quiver, mounted it on the bow, pulled the string and contemptuously asked Parashuram, 'Oh Brahmin! Listen to me. My arrow does not go in vain. Show (tell) me a target for it immediately (15-17).

लोकान्पादयुगं वापि वद शीघ्रं ममाज्ञया। अयं लोकः परो वाथ त्वया गन्तुं न शक्यते।। 18।।
एवं त्वं हि प्रकर्तव्यं वद शीघ्रं ममाज्ञया। एवं वदति श्रीरामे भार्गवो विकृताननः।।19।।

lokānpādayugaṃ vāpi vada śīghraṃ mamājñayā /
ayaṃ lokaḥ paro vātha tvayā gantuṃ na śakyate //
evaṃ tvaṃ hi prakartavyaṃ vada śīghraṃ mamājñayā /
evaṃ vadati śrīrāme bhārgavo vikṛtānanaḥ //

Should I aim at the Lokas (i.e. various worlds which you have conquered by virtue of your righteousness, penances, austerities and noble deeds) or at your feet—out of these, I command you to show me one immediately. (I shall pierce it with this arrow and mind you) You cannot go and hide or take shelter now either in this world or the next world (i.e. the terrestrial world and the heavens or the world of after-life) (18). Tell me immediately what shall I do with you (or how shall I treat you, or deal with you, for I have had enough of your arrogance and haughtiness)?' Hearing such fearless, courageous and aggressive words of Sri Ram, Brighu's son Parashuram's face suddenly became sullen, dull and gloomy (i.e. he was totally taken aback and shell-shocked at Sri Ram's bold, brave and fearless demeanours. Parashuram had never expected this, as he was accustomed to his Kshatriya opponents always kneeling down before him and pleading for mercy, and was therefore ill prepared for this sudden turn of events) (19).

संस्मरन्पूर्ववृत्तान्तमिदं वचनमब्रवीत्। राम राम महाबाहो जाने त्वां परमेश्वरम्।। 20।।
पुराणपुरुषं विष्णुं जगत्सर्गलयोद्भवम्। बाल्येऽहं तपसा विष्णुमाराधयितुमञ्जसा।। 21।।
चक्रतीर्थं शुभं गत्वा तपसा विष्णुमन्वहम्। अतोषयं महात्मानं नारायणमनन्यधीः।। 22।।
ततः प्रसन्नो देवेशः शङ्खचक्रगदाधरः। उवाच मां रघुश्रेष्ठ प्रसन्नमुखपङ्कजः।। 23।।

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saṁsmaranpūrvavṛttāntamidaṃ vacanamabravīt /
rāma rāma mahābāho jāne tvāṃ parameśvaram //
purāṇapuruṣaṃ viṣṇuṃ jagatsargalayodbhavam /
bālye'haṃ tapasā viṣṇumārādhayitumañjasā //
cakratīrthaṃ śubhaṃ gatvā tapasā viṣṇumanvaham /
atoṣayaṃ mahātmānaṃ nārāyaṇamananyadhīḥ //
tataḥ prasanno deveśaḥ śaṅkhacakragadādharaḥ /
uvāca māṃ raghuśreṣṭha prasannamukhapaṅkajaḥ //

Then, remembering the episode of an earlier time, he humbly submitted, 'Oh Sri Ram! Oh the most brave and courageous one! I have now recognised you as the supreme Lord (Parmeshwar) (20). You are verily Lord Vishnu himself who is the very cause of creation, its sustenance and annihilation, and is the one who is famed in the Purans. During my childhood days, I wanted to please Lord Vishnu by way of Tapa (doing severe penances and austerities) (21) and reached 'Chakra Tirtha' (literally, a religious site with a circular pond). There, I involved myself in daily and regular Tapa with great devotion, faith, conviction and intensity which pleased Vishnu (22). Oh the best in the clan of Raghu (Sri Ram)! At that time, the bearer of conch, discus and mace, blissful and cheerful Lord of Gods, Vishnu, said to me most happily (23)—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

उत्तिष्ठ तपसो ब्रह्मन्फलितं ते तपो महत्। मच्चिदंशेन युक्तस्त्वं जहि हैहयपुङ्गवम्।। 24।।
कार्तवीर्यं पितृहणं यदर्थं तपसः श्रमः। ततस्त्रिःसप्तकृत्वस्त्वं हत्वा क्षत्रियमण्डलम्।। 25।।

śrībhagavānuvāca

uttiṣṭha tapaso brahmanphalitaṃ te tapo mahat /
maccidaṁśena yuktastvaṃ jahi haihayapuṅgavam //
kārtavīryaṃ pitṛhaṇaṃ yadarthaṃ tapasaḥ śramaḥ /
tatastriḥsaptakṛtvastvaṃ hatvā kṣtriyamaṇḍalam //

The Lord said, 'Oh Brahmin! Conclude (wind-up) your austerities; your efforts are successful. You shall be empowered with a fraction of me (i.e. by a tiny part of my stupendous and potential powers). Slay Kartvirya who is the best in the clan of Haihay but is the killer of his own father, and for which purpose you have done such severe penances and austerities (Tapa). After doing that, kill all the Kshatriyas on this earth twenty one times repeatedly (24-25).

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कृत्स्नां भूमिं कश्यपाय दत्त्वा शान्तिमुपावह। त्रेतामुखे दाशरथिर्भूत्वा रामोऽहमव्ययः।।26।।
उत्पत्स्ये परया शक्त्या तदा द्रक्ष्यसि मां ततः। मत्तेजः पुनरादास्ये त्वयि दत्तं मया पुरा।।27।।
तदा तपश्चरँल्लोके तिष्ठ त्वं ब्रह्मणो दिनम्। इत्युक्त्वान्तर्दधे देवस्तथा सर्वं कृतं मया।।28।।

kṛtsanāṃ bhūmiṃ kaśyapāya dattvā śāntimupāvaha /
tretāmukhe dāśarathirbhūtvā rāmo'hamavyayaḥ //
utpatsye parayā śaktyā tadā drakṣyasi māṃ tataḥ /
mattejaḥ punarādāsye tvayi dattaṃ mayā purā //
tadā tapaścaraṁlloke tiṣṭha tvaṃ brahmaṇo dinam /
ityuktvāntardadhe devastathā sarvaṃ kṛtaṃ mayā //

After that, hand the earth over to sage Kashyap. Be blessed with peace and tranquility. I—who am an indestructible and eternal supreme Soul—shall take birth (i.e. reveal or manifest myself as an incarnation) as 'Ram' in the household of Dashrath in 'Treta Yug' (the 2nd era of the four era celestial cycle of creation and destruction) (26). At that time, you shall see me with my supreme power (i.e. my infinite cosmic energy in the form of Sita). At that moment, I shall take back from you those immense powers that I am bestowing upon, or delegating to you now (27). After that, till the end of the Kalpa [equivalent to roughly 432×10^6 years], you would do austerities and penances and stay peacefully on this earth' (28).

स एव विष्णुस्त्वं राम जातोऽसि ब्रह्मणार्थितः। मयि स्थितं तु त्वत्तेजस्त्वयैव पुनराहृतम्।।29।।
अद्य मे सफलं जन्म प्रतीतोऽसि मम प्रभो। ब्रह्मादिभिरलभ्यस्त्वं प्रकृतेः पारगो मतः।।30।।
त्वयि जन्मादिषड्भावा न सन्त्यज्ञानसंभवाः। निर्विकारोऽसि पूर्णस्त्वं गमनादिविवर्जितः।।31।।

sa eva viṣṇustvaṃ rāma jāto'si brahmaṇārthitaḥ /
mayi sthitaṃ tu tvattejastvayaiva punarāhṛtam //
adya me saphalaṃ janma pratīto'si mama prabho /
brahmādibhiralabhyastvaṃ prakṛteḥ pārago mataḥ //
tyayi janmādiṣaḍbhāvā na santyajñānasaṁbhavāḥ /
nirvikāro'si pūrṇastvaṃ gamanādivivarjitaḥ //

Oh Sri Ram! You are the same Vishnu. You have taken birth on the prayers of Brahma. Your immense powers which were vested in me till now have been taken back by you today (29). Today, I consider my life as worthy and successful (i.e. I feel extremely fortunate and privileged) that I have recognised you (as Lord Vishnu in your current form as Ram), more so because you are regarded as being inaccessible

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to even the creator Brahma and other exalted ones, as well as are beyond 'Nature' (30). You do not have ignorance-induced six faulty delusions, such as birth etc., which form an integral part of this creation. At the same time, you are free from wandering in the cycle of birth and death (or literally, the journey in various wombs as a mortal creature who has to repeatedly take birth due to its ignorance and the effects of the deeds done by it). You are faultless, changeless and complete in all respects (31).

[Note—According to Mudgalo-panishad, 4/7 of the Rig Veda tradition, the six faulty delusions, called 'Urmi', that create fear, sorrows, agonies and pains to a creature mentioned above are the following :—(1) hunger, (2) thirst, (3) grief, (4) Moha (worldly attachments, illusions, entrapments), (5) horrors of old age, and (6) death.]

यथा जले फेनजालं धूमौ वह्नौ यथा त्वयि। त्वदाधारा त्वद्विषया माया कार्यं सृजत्यहो।। 32।।
यावन्मायावृता लोकास्तावत्त्वां न विजानते। अविचारितसिद्धैषाविद्या विद्याविरोधिनी।।33।।

yathā jale phenajālaṃ dhūmo vahnau tathā tyayi /
tvadādhārā tvadviṣayā māyā kāryaṃ sṛjatyaho //
yāvanmāyāvṛtā lokāstāvattvāṃ na vijānate /
avicāritasiddhaiṣāvidyā vidyāvirodhinī //

Ah! Maya (delusions in this creation), which is dependent on you and which has you as its subject (in the sense that it prevents creatures from knowing the truth about you and your true form by keeping them deluded, but allows those upon whom you are pleased to learn the truth about you), creates various types of strange and mysterious worldly deeds and entanglements which are like foam in water and smoke from the fire (32). As long as a person is covered by (i.e. sheathed, engulfed, enveloped, surrounded, entangled by, under the spell of) Maya, he cannot realise (understand, recognise) you and your true form. This ignorance and lack of truthful knowledge or dearth of self realisation, which is inimical (opposed) to knowledge, wisdom, erudition, enlightenment and realisation, exists only till the time no thought is given to it (that Maya is casting a net to trap the creature and keep it bound in shackles of ignorance like a slave unaware of his legal rights) (33).

अविद्याकृतदेहादिसङ्घाते प्रतिबिम्बिता। चिच्छक्तिर्जीवलोकेऽस्मिन् जीव इत्यभिधीयते।। 34।।
यावद्देहमनःप्राणबुद्ध्यादिष्वभिमानवान्। तावत्कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वसुखदुःखादिभाग्भवेत्।। 35।।

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avidyākṛtadehādisaṅghāte pratibimbitā /
cicchaktirjīvaloke'smin jīva ityabhidhīyate //
yāvaddehamanaḥprāṇabuddhyādiṣvabhimānavān /
tāvatkartṛtvabhoktṛtvasukhaduḥkhādibhāgbhavet //

The reflection of the pure eternal consciousness obtained in the gross components of this mortal creation, such as in the body along with its bundle of other illusionary components, is mistakenly called a 'Jiva' (creature, an entity having life) in this mundane world. [In other words, the gross and perishable body which shows apparent signs of life because of the consciousness called Atma present inside it, is erroneously thought to be conscious itself, whereas the fact is on the contrary. So the body and other components of the creation, such as the mind and intellect, which exhibit signs of life, are called Jive or a living being.] This misconception is due to ignorance (34).

The Jiva undergoes sorrows and happiness, the feeling of being a doer of deeds and therefore an enjoyer or a sufferer from its deeds or actions only till the time it has pride and ego associated with its body, with the powers of its mind and intellect, with the stamina, strength, vitality and vigour that the life-force called Pran gives to it, along with the stupendous powers and potentials that its intelligence and wisdom bestows upon it (35).

आत्मनः संसृतिर्नास्ति बुद्धेर्ज्ञानं न जात्विति। अविवेकाद्द्वयं युङ्क्त्वा संसारीति प्रवर्तते।। 36 ।।
जडस्य चित्समायोगाच्चित्त्वं भूयाच्चितेस्तथा। जडसङ्गाज्जडत्वं हि जलाग्न्योर्मेलनं यथा।।37 ।।

ātmanaḥ saṁsṛtirnāsti buddherjñānaṃ na jātviti /
avivekāddvyayaṃ yuṅktvā saṁsārīti pravartate //
jaḍasya citsamāyogāccittvaṃ bhūyāccitestathā /
jaḍasaṅgājjaḍatvaṃ hi jalāgnyormelanaṃ yathā //

In reality, the Atma (microcosmic soul of the Jiva) has no relevance to the fictitious world of birth and death ,while the mind, acting independently, does not have the discriminatory powers of the intellect leading to wisdom, enlightenment and attainment or realisation of true knowledge of the 'self' (which is beyond logic and debates). Out of delusions and ignorance of the heart, the Jiva (creature) considers itself as 'belonging to this world', and consequentially indulges in various deeds and actions pertaining to the gross world (36).

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Even as contact between water and fire results in the former being influenced by the latter and vice versa, that is to say the water getting heated and the latter getting cooled, contact (i.e. union, interaction) between the inanimate (i.e. the mind-intellect) and the animate (i.e. the Atma, soul) results in the former getting affected (influenced) by the latter and vice-versa. That is, since the Atma residing inside the body of an ignorance driven creature has to interact with the outside world through the medium of the mind, it is erroneously led to think that it is doing such and such deed through the means of the body and is therefore the 'doer' of deeds and therefore also the one who enjoys and suffers from them. Similarly, the mind, being in close contact with the Atma during this intercourse, also mislead to think that it is the enlightened and wise conscious factor in the body of a creature. Both appear to have acquired the characters of the other (37).

यावत्त्वत्पादभक्तानां सङ्गसौख्यं न विन्दति। तावत्संसारदुःखौघान्न निवर्तेन्नरः सदा।। 38।।
तत्सङ्गलब्धया भक्त्या यदा त्वां समुपासते। तदा माया शनैर्याति तानवं प्रतिपद्यते।। 39।।

yāvattvatpādabhaktānāṃ saṅgasaukhyaṃ na vindati /
tāvatsaṁsāraduḥkhaughānna nivartennaraḥ sadā //
tatsaṅgalabdhayā bhaktyā yadā tvāṃ samupāsate /
tadā māyā śanairyāti tānavaṃ pratipadyate //

Till the time a person does not enjoy a constant company of those who are devoted to your lotus-like holy feet, he cannot get over the bundles of worldly sorrows, troubles, miseries and tribulations (38). When he starts to worship you with devotion, faith and dedication, which he has gradually acquired (imbibed) by constant, persistent, sincere and diligent contact with your ardent devotees, this Maya (delusions, ignorance) of yours, gradually, bit by bit, leaves him, and it becomes weak and ineffective over a period of time (39).

ततस्त्वज्ज्ञानसम्पन्नः सद्गुरुस्तेन लभ्यते। वाक्यज्ञानं गुरोर्लब्ध्वा त्वत्प्रसादाद्विमुच्यते।। 40।।
तस्मात्त्वद्भक्तिहीनानां कल्पकोटिशतैरपि। न मुक्तिशङ्का विज्ञानशङ्का नैव सुखं तथा।। 41।।

tatastvajjñānasampannaḥ sadgurustena labhyate /
vākyajñānaṃ gurorlabdhvā tvatprasādādvimucyate //
tasmāttvadbhaktihīnānāṃ kalpakoṭiśatairapi /
na muktiśaṅkā vijñānaśaṅkā naiva sukhaṃ tathā //

Then that seeker finds a true teacher (a moral preceptor) who is

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rich with wisdom and is deeply steeped in the true knowledge pertaining to you. And having attained knowledge of the supreme truth or reality in the shape of 'Maha Vakyas' (the eternal truths; the great sayings of the Vedas) by the blessings (teachings) of the wise teacher, he gets emancipation and salvation by your grace and kindness (40). Hence, those who are devoid of your devotion and lack dedication in you, cannot expect to have, even by a remote chance, either emancipation and salvation (Mukti) or 'Brahma-Gyan' (i.e. the knowledge of the true nature of the soul—that is, it is a microcosmic fraction of the vast macrocosmic supreme Soul of the creation called Brahm) in millions of Kalpas. [That is, almost eternally, perpetually, they will be entangled in the entrapping web cast by Maya in this mundane world and its incumbent cycle of birth and death as well as endless chain of miseries and torments.] Further, this is why there is no chance or scope of their ever having real, true happiness and bliss (41).

[Note :—(1) The Upanishads are great exponents of the metaphysical and spiritual philosophy enshrined in the Vedas. They expound and elucidate what the Vedas essentially mean in a very effective manner. Let us briefly see here what the four Mahavakyas are as described in selected Upanishads.

(a) Painglo-panishad, 3/2 of Shukla Yajur Veda says—'Tattwa Masi' = that essence is you; 'Twam Tadasi' = you are that; 'Twam Brahmasi' = you are Brahm; 'Aham Brahmasi' = I am Brahm.

(b) Mandal Brahmino-panishad, 2/2/5 of the same Veda asserts—'So-a-ham' = that is me, while the same Upanishad, in 3/1/6, asserts 'Twamewahameva Twamiti' = you are I and I am you.

(c) Shukar Rahasyo-panishad, 21/1-4 of Krishna Yajur Veda says—'Om Pragayanam Brahm' = OM salutations! Enlightenment and truthful knowledge is Brahm and vice versa; 'OM Aham Brahmasmi' = OM salutations! I am that Brahm; 'OM Tatwamasi' = OM salutations! Verily, that essence is you; 'OM Ayamatma Brahm' = OM salutations! This Atma is indeed Brahm.

(d) An entire Upanishad called Mahavakyo-panishad of the Atharva Veda tradition is devoted to this subject. At other places in the different Upanishads also, there appear these glories axioms and maxims in different words but meaning the same truth.

Some of them are the following :—(a) 'Pragnanam Brahm' = Consciousness is Brahm. It is extracted from Aitreya Upanishad of Rig Veda.

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(b) 'Tat Twam Asi' = That thou art. It is culled from Chandogya Upanishad in Sam Veda. (c) 'Ayam Atma' = This Self is Brahm. It is taken from Mandukya Upanishad of Atharva Veda. (d) 'Aham Brahm Asmi' = I am Brahm. It appears in the Brihardyanarkya Upanishad of Yajur Veda. The meaning of these 4 Mahavakyas are as following:— (a) The one and the same consciousness acts has the common substrata for both the macrocosm and microcosm. (b) That infinite all-pervading truth is the consciousness in you (i.e. the Jiva or the creature). (c) The Atma, which forms the very core, inner-self of a Jiva and forms its core personality, is the same as the universally prevalent supreme, absolute consciousness called the Brahm. (See also Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse no. 27 and its footnote). (d) The consciousness factor within the precincts of the creature's inner-self is the same as the supreme consciousness which is Brahm. As a natural, corollary, therefore, the Jiva becomes synonymous with Brahm.

(2) Emphasis is laid on attainment of the Lord's true knowledge by the path of Bhakti (pure, ardent, uncorrupted, dedicated devotion) as opposed to Gyan (reliance on knowledge, logic, intelligence, scriptural debates etc.). A simple illustration which can stand scientific verification is given as follows : — suppose there are two rooms—A and B. The inner walls of room no. A have been painted in glossy, aluminum white, while that of room no. B with coal-tar, which makes it dark and gloomy. In the absence of any source of light i.e. in absolute darkness, both the rooms appear equally dark—the colour of their walls cannot be seen. Here darkness is ignorance, delusions and hallucinations generated by Maya which prevents us from discerning the good (white) from the bad (dark wall).

Now, suppose a candle (representing wisdom, knowledge, discrimination faculty and intellect) is lit in the centre of both the rooms. Room no. A shines brightly because the glossy white walls reflect all the light falling on it (it is basic physics) while room no. B appears gloomy and dark, except for the area immediately surrounding the candle, because the coal-tar black paint on the wall absorbs all the light falling on it and none is reflected back. Even if a 100 watt bulb is lit in room no. B it will be no match for a mere 25 watt bulb in room no. A. This amply illustrates that inspite of the light of wisdom and knowledge being kindled (ignited) in our hearts, if we do not remove all the evils, vices, perversions and other dark gloomy characters from ourselves, we would still remain not much better off than total darkness of ignorance. To remove the dark colour, we ought to white wash the walls of room no. B with several coats of white paint—and with each coat, the darkness proportionately abets and brightness

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shines through. Likewise, Bhakti (devotion) and repeated/constant recitation of Sri Ram's holy name acts as that layer of paint and removes all the tarnish from our inner-selves. It is only then that bliss shines through. The pure consciousness which is the soul is inherently enlightened and wise like the burning candle. But its light cannot light our inner-self unless we clean the inner-walls from the thick coat of soot symbolising evils, vices, perversions, turpitudes, sins, misdemeanours etc. covering it which tend to suppress the brilliance of the soul. This can only be removed by Bhakti or dedication and devotion. It is then that the pure consciousness lights up our whole inner-self. In other words, Bhakti is a medium to enhance the brilliance of the pure conscious soul which is the same as the Brahm. This latter is *enlightenment*—or awareness of the truth.

The reader is advised to go through the full text of the chapter called Ram Gita of Uttar Kand, Canto 5 to fully grasp the in-depth meaning of the metaphysical implications and philosophical aspects of Adhyatma Ramayan which are most comprehensively explained in it, as well as in a separate appendix that has been added to this book that explains these concepts in detail with the aid of various diagrams, charts, elaborate notes etc. A thorough understanding will help the reader to understand the text of the Ramayan better.]

अतस्त्वत्पादयुगले भक्तिर्मे जन्मजन्मनि। स्यात्त्वद्भक्तिमतां सङ्गोऽविद्या याभ्यां विनश्यति।। 42।।
लोके त्वद्भक्तिनिरतास्त्वद्धर्मामृतवर्षिणः। पुनन्ति लोकमखिलं किं पुनःस्वकुलोद्भवान्।। 43।।

atastvatpādayugale bhaktirme janmajanmani /
syāttvadbhaktimatāṃ saṅgo'vidyā yābhyāṃ vinaśyati //
loke tvadbhaktiniratāstvaddharmāmṛtavarṣiṇaḥ /
punanti lokamakhilaṃ kiṃ punaḥsvakulodbhavān //

Therefore, my only wish/desire is to devotedly worship you and have sincere and unwavering dedication, devotion and faith in your two holy feet. I should have company of your devotees for all my births and ages to come, because ignorance can be eliminated by these two ways (methods) only (42). In this world, those who remain engrossed in your Bhakti (sincere devotion), who are steadfastly vigilant and sincerely eager in having your devotion, who adore you and devotedly worship you, those who pour the nectar-like rain by way of preaching and elucidating upon, by way of highlighting and explaining the righteous, noble and upright path shown by you, which is called 'Dharma'—such persons not only purify and redeem the

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whole world at large but also those born in their own clan. There is no doubt about it (43).

नमोऽस्तु जगतां नाथ नमस्ते भक्तिभावन। नमः कारुणिकानन्त रामचन्द्र नमोऽस्तु ते।। 44।।
देव यद्यत्कृतं पुण्यं मया लोकजिगीषया। तत्सर्वं तव बाणाय भूयाद्राम नमोऽस्तु ते।।45।।

namo'stu jagatāṃ nātha namaste bhaktibhāvana /
namaḥ kāruṇikānanta rāmacandra namo'stu te //
deva yadyatkṛtaṃ puṇyaṃ mayā lokajigīṣayā /
tatsarvaṃ tava bāṇāya bhūyādrāma namo'stu te //

Oh Lord of the world! I bow before you in reverence and adoration. Oh the one who loves sincere devotion and faith! I bow before you to pay my obeisance. Oh the merciful, compassionate one! Oh the one without an end (i.e. the eternal one)! I bow before you in reverence. Oh Sri Ramchandra! I repeatedly bow before you to pay my respects and deep regard (44). Oh Lord! Whatever righteous and noble deeds that I have done with the object of attaining the divine and glorious world characterised by righteousness, nobility, good virtues and deeds—let all those worlds be the target of your arrow (see verse no. 15-18). [That is, let all my good deeds and their effects be nullified by your arrow because I have sinned against you by misbehaving with you besides becoming haughty and arrogant, something that does not behoove the stature of an exalted Brahmin clan in which I am born. Let this be my punishment!] Oh Sri Ram! I submit myself before you with a bowed head' (45).

ततः प्रसन्नो भगवान् श्रीरामः करुणामयः। प्रसन्नोऽस्मि तव ब्रह्मन्यत्ते मनसि वर्तते।। 46।।
दास्ये तदखिलं कामं मा कुरुष्वात्र संशयम्। ततः प्रीतेन मनसा भार्गवो राममब्रवीत्।।47।।

tataḥ prasanno bhagavān śrīrāmaḥ karuṇāmayaḥ /
prasanno'smi tava brahmanyatte manasi vartate //
dāsye tadakhilaṃ kāmaṃ mā kuruṣvātra saṁśayam /
tataḥ prītena manasā bhārgavo rāmamabravīt //

Then the most merciful and compassionate Lord Ram became pleased with him and said, 'Oh Brahmin! I am pleased. I shall fulfill all the wishes of your heart; do not doubt it'. At this assurance, Parashuram was happy and he said to Sri Ram (46-47)—

यदि मेऽनुग्रहो राम तवास्ति मधुसूदन। त्वद्भक्तसङ्गस्त्वत्पादे दृढा भक्तिः सदास्तु मे।। 48।।
स्तोत्रमेतत्पठेद्यस्तु भक्तिहीनोऽपि सर्वदा। त्वद्भक्तिस्तस्य विज्ञानं भूयादन्ते स्मृतिस्तव।।49।।

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yadi me'nugraho rāma tavāsti madhusūdana /
tvadbhaktasaṅgastvatpāde dṛḍhā bhaktiḥ sadāstu me //
stotrametatpaṭhedyastu bhaktihīno'pi sarvadā /
tvadbhaktistasya vijñānaṃ bhūyādante smṛtistava //

'Oh Madhusudan Ram (i.e. the most beautiful, charming, attractive and enchanting Ram who keeps the heart in thrall)! If you are pleased with me, let me have constant communion with your devotees and have strong, steadfast and unwavering devotion, faith, dedication and conviction for your holy lotus-like feet (48). Besides this, if any non-believer or one who is devoid of devotion, faith, conviction, dedication and worship (towards/for you) reads or recites this Stotra (devotional hymns), let him be blessed with your devotion and faith, let him have endearment and affection for you, let him become enlightened, realised and a wise one, and let him remember you at the end (i.e. at the time of his death)' (49).

तथेति राघवेणोक्तः परिक्रम्य प्रणम्य तम्। पूजितस्तदनुज्ञातो महेन्द्राचलमन्वगात्।। 50।।
राजा दशरथो हृष्टो रामं मृतमिवागतम्। आलिङ्ग्यालिङ्ग्य हर्षेण नेत्राभ्यां जलमुत्सृजत्।।51।।

tatheti rāghaveṇoktaḥ parikramya praṇamya tam /
pūjitastadanujñāto mahendrācalamanvagāt //
rajā daśaratho hṛṣṭo rāmaṃ mṛtamivāgatam /
āliṅgyāliṅgya harṣeṇa netrābhyāṃ jalamutsṛjat //

Thereafter, when Sri Ram assured him by saying 'It shall be so', Parashuram reverentially circumambulated him and bowed his head before him, and after being worshipped and honoured himself by Sri Ram in return, he proceeded to Mt. Mahendra (50). King Dashrath thought that Sri Ram has returned back from the jaws of death. He enthusiastically and full of thrill embraced Sri Ram repeatedly, and rained tears of relief, joy and exhilaration from his eyes (51).

[Note :—The meeting place with Parashuram was during the marriage ceremony at Janakpur according to Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas and not en-route to Ayodhya.]

ततः प्रीतेन मनसा स्वस्थचित्तः पुरं ययौ। रामलक्ष्मणशत्रुघ्नभरता देवसंमिताः।
स्वां स्वां भार्यामुपादाय रेमिरे स्वस्वमन्दिरे।। 52।।
मातापितृभ्यां संहृष्टो रामः सीतासमन्वितः। रेमे वैकुण्ठभवने श्रिया सह यथा हरिः।।53।।

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tataḥ prītena manasā svasthacittaḥ puraṃ yayau /
rāmalakṣmaṇaśatrughnabharatā devasaṃmitāḥ /
svāṃ svāṃ bharyāmupādāya remire svasvamandire //
mātāpitṛbhyāṃ saṁhṛṣṭo rāmaḥ sītāsamanvitaḥ /
reme vaikuṇṭhabhavane śriyā saha yathā hariḥ //

After that, all of them (i.e. the marriage party) arrived at Ayodhya with a delighted and cheerful heart and mind. There, Sri Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan began enjoying their conjugal lives with their respective spouses in palaces which were like the abode of Gods (i.e. were as majestic and comfortable as the abode of the Gods in the heavens) (52). Along with Sita, Sri Ram enhanced the happiness of his parents and lived cheerfully just like Lord Vishnu resides with Laxmi in his abode called Vaikuntha (53).

युधाजिन्नाम कैकेयीभ्राता भरतमातुलः। भरतं नेतुमागच्छत्स्वराज्यं प्रीतिसंयुतः।। 54।।
प्रेषयामास भरतं राजा स्नेहसमन्वितः। शत्रुघ्नं चापि संपूज्य युधाजितमरिन्दमः।। 55।।

yudhājinnāma kaikeyībhrātā bharatamātulaḥ /
bharataṃ netumāgacchatsvarājyaṃ prītisaṁyutaḥ //
preṣayāmāsa bharataṃ rājā snehasamanvitaḥ /
śatrughnaṃ cāpi saṃpūjya yudhājitamarindamaḥ //

During that period, Kaikeyi's brother and maternal uncle of Bharat, named Yudhajit, came there (at Ayodhya) to lovingly take Bharat to his place (54). The king (Dashrath), who was a vanquisher of enemies, welcomed and duly honoured Yudhajit, and at his affectionate request, he sent Bharat and Shatrughan with him (55).

कौसल्या शुशुभे देवी रामेण सह सीतया। देवमातेव पौलोम्या शच्या शक्रेण शोभना।। 56।।

kausalyā śuśubhe devī rāmeṇa saha sītayā /
devamāteva paulomyā śacyā śakreṇa śobhanā //

Mother Kaushalya looked as magnificent and adorable in the company of Sri Ram and Sita as Aditi, the mother of Gods, looks along with Shachi, the daughter of Pulom, and Indra, the king of Gods (56).

साकेते लोकनाथप्रथितगुणगणो लोकसङ्गीतकीर्तिः
श्रीरामः सीतयास्तेऽखिलजननिकरानन्दसन्दोहमूर्तिः।
नित्यश्रीर्निर्विकारो निरवधिविभवो नित्यमायानिरासो
मायाकार्यानुसारी मनुज इव सदा भाति देवोऽखिलेशः।।57।।

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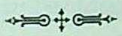
sākete lokanāthaprathitaguṇagaṇo lokasaṅgītakīrtiḥ
śrīrāmaḥ sītayāste'khilajananikarānandasandohamūrtiḥ /
nityaśrīrnirvikāro niravadhivibhavo nityamāyānirāso
māyākāryānusārī manuja iva sadā bhāti devo'khileśaḥ //

He whose glorious virtues and good characters are famed with Brahma and other Lokpals (custodians of the world), whose divine glories, good fames and stupendous accomplishments are lauded and sung in all the worlds, who is an embodiment of happiness, bliss, peace and tranquility of all humans put together (i.e. the whole humanity), who is eternal, infinite and changeless, who is a treasury of majesty, radiance, splendour, elegance, dignity and beauty, who is faultless and without blemishes, and who, though being perpetually beyond the purview of Maya (delusions, ignorance, illusions, hallucinations, misconceptions et al.), still behaves and appears as if he were an ordinary person, follows the ordinary norms set by the creator for human beings, and appears to pursue worldly deeds and does them like ordinary humans—that all-pervading, all-encompassing supreme and the only Lord of the creation, Lord Ram, took up residence in Ayodhya (Saket), accompanied by his divine consort Sita (57).



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AYODHYA KAND

Ayodhya Kand — Canto 1

Sage Narad meets Sri Ram

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

एकदा सुखमासीनं रामं स्वान्तःपुराजिरे। सर्वाभरणसंपन्नं रत्नसिंहासने स्थितम्।।1।।
नीलोत्पलदलश्यामं कौस्तुभामुक्तकन्धरम्। सीतया रत्नदण्डेन चामरेणाथ वीजितम्।।2।।
विनोदयन्तं ताम्बूलचर्वणादिभिरादरात्। नारदोऽवतरद्द्रष्टुमम्बराद्यत्र राघवः।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

ekadā sukhamāsīnaṃ rāmaṃ svāntaḥpurājire /
sarvābharaṇasaṃpannaṃ ratnasiṁhāsane sthitam //
nīlotpaladalaśyāmaṃ kaustubhāmuktakandharam /
sītayā ratnadaṇḍena cāmareṇātha vījitam //
vinodayantaṃ tāmbūlacarvaṇādibhirādarāt /
nārado'vataraddraṣṭumambarādyatra rāghavaḥ //

Lord Shiva said to Parvati—'Oh Parvati! One day—when Sri Ram, fully decked up and adorned by all types of ornaments, was sitting comfortably and happily on a jewel-studded throne in the palace courtyard (1) while Sita was swaying the whisk with a jewel-studded handle upon the blue-and-dark-hued (i.e. complexioned) Sri Ram adorned with a 'Kaustav Mani' (a jewel worn by Vishnu on his chest) (2), and who was enjoying betel leaves with various spices that were offered to him most respectfully (by his attendants)—the celestial sage Narad descended from the sky to see (meet) him (3).

शुद्धस्फटिकसङ्काशः शरच्चन्द्र इवामलः। अतर्कितमुपायातो नारदो दिव्यदर्शनः।।4।।
तं दृष्ट्वा सहसोत्थाय रामः प्रीत्या कृताञ्जलिः। ननाम शिरसा भूमौ सीतया सह भक्तिमान्।।5।।

śuddhasphaṭikasaṅkāśaḥ śaraccandra ivāmalaḥ /
atarkitamupāyāto nārado divyadarśanaḥ //
taṃ dṛṣṭvā sahasotthāya rāmaḥ prītyā kṛtāñjaliḥ /
nanāma śirasā bhūmau sītayā saha bhaktimān //

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Seeing Narad—who was pure, auspicious and had a glazed radiance like that of a Sfatik Mani (a gem made of crystal or quartz), was divinely brilliant and glorious like a full moon of a winter night, and who was an image of divinity and spirituality—come suddenly and unannounced, Sri Ram stood up. Accompanied by Sita, he reverentially and affectionately welcomed the sage with palms joined together in submission, and placed their heads on the ground (as a token of great respect and honour as well as a sign of humility) before him (4-5).

उवाच नारदं रामः प्रीत्या परमया युतः। संसारिणां मुनिश्रेष्ठ दुर्लभं तव दर्शनम्।
अस्माकं विषयासक्तचेतसां नितरां मुने।। 6।।
अवाप्तं मे पूर्वजन्मकृतपुण्यमहोदयैः। संसारिणापि हि मुने लभ्यते सत्समागमः।। 7।।
अतस्त्वद्दर्शनादेव कृतार्थोऽस्मि मुनीश्वर। किं कार्यं ते मया कार्यं ब्रूहि तत्करवाणि भोः।।8।।

uvāca nāradaṃ rāmaḥ prītyā paramayā yutaḥ /
saṁsāriṇāṃ muniśreṣṭha durlabhaṃ tava darśanam /
asmākaṃ viṣayāsaktacetasāṃ nitarāṃ muneḥ //
avāptaṃ me pūrvajanmakṛtapuṇyamahodayaiḥ /
saṁsāriṇāpi hi mune labhyate satsamāgamaḥ //
atastvaddarśanādeva kṛtārtho'smi munīśvara /
kiṃ kāryaṃ te mayā kāryaṃ brūhi tatkaravāṇi bhoḥ //

Sri Ram then addressed Narad in affectionate terms—'Oh the most exalted sage! For worldly people like us who are ever engrossed in the pursuit of gratification of the sense organs and attached to the materialistic world, having your Darshan (divine holy viewing or meeting) is most difficult and a rare event. Oh Sage! It is by the emergence of the good effects (results) of my past noble, virtuous and righteous deeds that I have had the good fortune of having your Darshan, because when righteousness makes its presence felt, even worldly people have a chance to get communion with holy and pious saints (6-7). Hence, Oh sage, I have been greatly honoured and feel privileged at having your divine Darshan; now tell me what I shall do for you so that I can fulfill your wishes' (8).

अथ तं नारदोऽप्याह राघवं भक्तवत्सलम्। किं मोहयसि मां राम वाक्यैर्लोकानुसारिभिः।। 9।।
संसार्यहमिति प्रोक्तं सत्यमेतत्त्वया विभो। जगतामादिभूता या सा माया गृहिणी तव।। 10।।

atha taṃ nārado'pyāha rāghavaṃ bhaktavatsalam /
kiṃ mohayasi māṃ rāma vākyairlokānusāribhiḥ //

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saṁsāryahamiti proktaṃ satyametattvayā vibho /
jagatāmādibhūtā yā sā māyā gṛhiṇī tava //

Then sage Narad said to Raghav (Sri Ram) who is compassionate towards his devotees—'Oh Sri Ram! Why do you create delusions (deception) for me by speaking words like an ordinary human being? (9). Oh Vibho (omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal and all powerful Lord—Sri Ram)! Your words that you are like an ordinary human belonging to this world are appropriate on the surface, so it seems, because Maya—the primordial cosmic energy and the primary cause of all creation—has manifested itself as your divine consort (housewife, i.e. Sita). [That is, it is your simplicity and lack of arrogance that you speak such humble words] (10).

त्वत्सन्निकर्षाज्जायन्ते तस्यां ब्रह्मादयः प्रजाः। त्वदाश्रया सदा भाति माया या त्रिगुणात्मिका ।। 11 ।।
सूतेऽजस्त्रं शुक्लकृष्णलोहिताः सर्वदा प्रजाः। लोकत्रयमहागेहे गृहस्थस्त्वमुदाहृतः ।। 12 ।।

tvatsannikarṣājjāyante tasyāṃ brahmādayaḥ prajāḥ /
tvadāśrayā sadā bhāti māyā yā triguṇātmikā //
sūte'jasraṃ śuklakṛṣṇalohitāḥ sarvadā prajāḥ /
lokatrayamahāgehe gṛhasthastvamudāhṛtaḥ //

Oh Lord! Merely by having contact with you (or being close to you), that eternal, supreme and cosmic energy, which is also called your delusion creating powers or Maya, creates Brahma and all other subjects (creatures) of this creation. That Maya—which has the three inherent qualities of Satva (truthful, righteous, virtuous and noble qualities), Raj (more mundane qualities such as desire for enjoyment and seeking pleasures of the sensual world), and Tam (perversions, evils, vices and other such base and mean qualities)—is always dependent upon you, and is empowered by you to make itself evident, to enable one to experience it and perceive it (only because you want it to be so). Maya produces three types of creatures or subjects in this creation in accordance with the three qualities mentioned above. These subjects can be classified into these three groups—those who are 'white or fair complexioned', those who are 'red or copper coloured, and those who are 'dark complexioned'. This creatures or subjects are classified into these three categories according to their predominant characters, qualities and virtues respectively. You are called the householder of this great, vast, macrocosmic household called the 'Triloki' (literally,

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the entire universe consisting of the three worlds—celestial, terrestrial, subterranean) (11-12).

[Note :—The 'white complexioned' are the upper class of people in society—the Satvic people. The 'copper coloured' are the Rajsic class—the middle rung people in the society. The 'dark or black complexioned' are the ignorant Tamsic class of people, the lowest rung of society. See also (a) Ayodhya Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 13-15; (b) Aranya Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 20-27.]

त्वं विष्णुर्जानकी लक्ष्मीः शिवस्त्वं जानकी शिवा।
ब्रह्मा त्वं जानकी वाणी सूर्यस्त्वं जानकी प्रभा।। 13।।
भवान् शशाङ्कः सीता तु रोहिणी शुभलक्षणा। शक्रस्त्वमेव पौलोमी सीता स्वाहानलो भवान्।। 14।।

tvaṃ viṣṇurjānakī lakṣmīḥ śivastvaṃ jānakī śivā /
brahmā tvaṃ jānakī vāṇī sūryastvaṃ jānakī prabhā //
bhavān śaśāṅkaḥ sītā tu rohiṇī śubhalakṣaṇā /
śakrastvameva paulomī sītā svāhānalo bhavān //

You are Lord Vishnu while Janki (Sita) is Laxmi; you are Shiva while Janki is Parvati; you are Brahma while Janki is Saraswati; and you are the Sun while Janki is its radiance and splendour (13). You are the Moon while Sita is the chaste and virtuous Rohini; You are Indra while Sita is Shachi, the daughter of Pulom; and you are the Fire God while Sita is 'Swaha' (the word pronounced while making offerings to the gods in the sacrificial fire) (14).

यमस्त्वं कालरूपश्च सीता संयमिनी प्रभो। निर्ऋतिस्त्वं जगन्नाथ तामसी जानकी शुभा।। 15।।
राम त्वमेव वरुणो भार्गवी जानकी शुभा। वायुस्त्वं राम सीता तु सदागतिरितीरिता।। 16।।

yamastvaṃ kālarūpaśca sītā saṁyaminī prabho /
nirṛtistvaṃ jagannātha tāmasī jānakī śubhā //
rāma tvameva varuṇo bhārgavī jānakī śubhā /
vāyustvaṃ rāma sītā tu sadāgatiritīritā //

Oh Lord! You are like the death God 'Yam' for all (the creation) while Sita is 'Sanyam' (meaning restraint, self control). Oh Lord of the world! You are the benign God called 'Niriti' (who is worshipped in the south west direction during religious sacrifices) who symbolises such virtues as detachment and dispassion, while the auspicious Sita personifies that aspect of creation that ties the creature to delusions and ignorance in the world because she is Maya personified (15). You

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are Varun (the Lord of water; also meaning the Sun) while the good charactered Janki is Varuni (his consort); you are Vayu (Wind God) while Sita is Sadaagati (literally, one who is constantly on the move or is ever changing) (16).

कुबेरस्त्वं राम सीता सर्वसंपत्प्रकीर्तिता। रुद्राणी जानकी प्रोक्ता रुद्रस्त्वं लोकनाशकृत्।। 17।।
लोके स्त्रीवाचकं यावत्तत्सर्वं जानकी शुभा। पुन्नामवाचकं यावत्तत्सर्वं त्वं हि राघव।। 18।।
तस्माल्लोकत्रये देव युवाभ्यां नास्ति किञ्चन।। 19।।

kuberastvaṃ rāma sītā sarvasaṃpatprakīrtitā /
rudrāṇī jānakī proktā rudrastvaṃ lokanāśakṛt //
loke strīvācakaṃ yāvattatsarvaṃ jānakī śubhā /
punnāmavācakaṃ yāvattatsarvaṃ tvaṃ hi rāghava //
tasmāllokatraye deva yuvābhyāṃ nāsti kiñcana //

Oh Sri Ram! You are Kuber and Sita represents all his wealth, prosperity and majesty; you are Rudra (the angriest form of Lord Shiva), the one who wrathfully slays (annihilates) the world while the auspicious Sita is called Rudrani, his divine consort (17). Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! Verily, whatever is masculine in this creation is represented by you, while the feminine aspect is denoted by Sita. Hence, oh Lord, nothing in this world exists which is not one or the other aspect of either of you (18-19).

त्वदाभासोदिताज्ञानमव्याकृतमितीर्यते। तस्मान्महांस्ततः सूत्रं लिङ्गं सर्वात्मकं ततः।। 20।।
अहङ्कारश्च बुद्धिश्च पञ्चप्राणेन्द्रियाणि च। लिङ्गमित्युच्यते प्राज्ञैर्जन्ममृत्युसुखादिमत्।। 21।।

tvadābhāsoditājñānamavyākṛtamitīryate /
tasmānmahāṁstataḥ sūtraṃ liṅgaṃ sarvātmakaṃ tataḥ //
ahaṅkāraśca buddhiśca pañcaprāṇendriyāṇi ca /
liṅgamityucyate prājñairjanmamṛtyusukhādimat //

Your existence is so esoteric and secret that it can only be experienced and known by enlightened wisdom and realisation of what constitutes the absolute 'truth' which is formless, nameless and attributeless, and is called 'Avyakrit'. Its splendour and dazzling brilliance creates in its wake a shadow of ignorance (just like the light of the sun casts a dark shadow). This ignorance is characterised by having a notion of 'Mahattwa', or an element of pride and ego, of importance, greatness and grandeur. It is so subtle and imperceptible

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that no one is able to recognise that he has it, though it inherently is present dissolved uniformly in the whole creation and its creatures. So, when that primary entity called Avyakrit was enveloped by its own shadow, it virtually became ignorant about its pristine pure and uncorrupt nature. As a result of it, it developed Mahattwa (i.e. it began to think that it has the potential to start the process of creation; that otherwise neutral and dispassionate entity began to think in terms of a creating something that it would call its own product and which would showcase its magnificent and fantastic powers of creation from nothing; it forgot that it is about to set off a chain of actions that would tie it down in its own self-created bog, as it were). So from this Mahattwa evolved the subtle body of the vast creation, called the 'Sutratma' (Hiranya-garbha). The latter produced the gross body of creation, called the 'Ling-Deha' consisting of various sense organs. [The macrocosmic gross body produced from Hiranya-garbha is known as the Viraat Purush. From the latter, the rest of the myriad creation, including the individual creature, evolved. These concepts have been explained separately in an appendix no.2 of this book.] of the the myriad creatures of this world) (20). [Describing what is 'Ling-Deha', Narad elucidates further—] The wise and learned people (Pragya Jan) call the collective product produced by the various permutations and combinations or assorted collection of such qualities as 'Ahankar' (pride, vanity, hypocrisy, haughtiness, arrogance) and 'Buddhi' (intelligence, erudition, discrimination, rationality, logic), as well as the five vital life sustaining vital winds called the 'Panchprans' and the ten sense organs called 'Indris' as 'Ling-Deh', having the attributes of and characterised by birth, death, sorrows and happiness (21).

[Note :—(1) The word 'Avyakrit' means something that is secret and unknown, has no name, form and attributes, some entity that has no fault or blemishes, something that is the cause of all other things; according to Sankhya school of Hindu philosophy, it refers to Nature.(i) The five vital wind forces of life are the following—(a) Pran (the vital air that sustains life); (b) Apan (the wind that passes down in the body); (c) Samaan (balancing forces of life); (d) Vyan (the vital air which pervades throughout the body and the mind); (e) Uddan (the air/wind which helps the body to rise up). (ii) The ten sense organs are—five organs of perception such as ears, nose, tongue, eyes, skin, and five organs of action such as mouth, hand, leg, organs of

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excretion and organs of reproduction. See also Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 28-34.]

स एव जीवसंज्ञश्च लोके भाति जगन्मयः। अवाच्यानाद्यविद्यैव कारणोपाधिरुच्यते।। 22।।
स्थूलं सूक्ष्मं कारणाख्यमुपाधित्रितयं चितेः। एतैर्विशिष्टो जीवः स्याद्वियुक्तः परमेश्वरः।।23।।

sa eva jīvasaṁjñaśca loke bhāti jaganmayaḥ /
avācyānādyavidyaiva kāraṇopādhirucyate //
sthūlaṃ sūkṣmaṃ kāraṇākhyamupādhitritayaṃ citeḥ /
etairviśiṣṭo jīvaḥ syādviyuktaḥ parameśvaraḥ //

The pure consciousness, when it is engrossed in this deceptive world and falsely identifies its pure self with this gross body and becomes proud of it, is called a Jiva (a living creature). 'Ignorance' which has no end or beginning and which cannot be described by words is the cause and attribute or characteristic feature of this thing called Jiva (creature) (22). Pure, unadulterated consciousness has three forms of bodies in which it resides when it assumes the form of a creature—physical or gross, subtle and invisible, and causal or originating. When this consciousness is equipped with the attributes or characters associated with these three types of bodies, it is known as Jiva (creature), and when it is free from these three, it is famed as 'Parmeshwar' (the supreme Soul) (23).

[Note—These three states of existence have been described in detail in appendix no.2 of this book.]

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्याख्या संसृतिर्या प्रवर्तते। तस्या विलक्षणः साक्षी चिन्मात्रस्त्वं रघूत्तम।। 24।।
त्वत्त एव जगज्जातं त्वयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्। त्वय्येव लीयते कृत्स्नं तस्मात्त्वं सर्वकारणम्।।25।।

jāgratsvapnasuṣuptyākhyā saṁsṛtiryā pravartate /
tasyā vilakṣaṇaḥ sākṣī cinmātrastvaṃ raghūttama //
tvatta eva jagajjātaṃ tvayi sarvaṃ pratiṣṭhitam /
tvayyeva līyate kṛtsnaṃ tasmāttvaṃ sarvakāraṇam //

Oh the best in the clan of Raghu (Sri Ram)! You are unique in the sense that you are a stranger to, are beyond and superior to, exception to and separate from, beyond the purview, reach and realm of the three states in which the whole creation exists. These three states of existence are called—the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state of existence. You are simply a conscious witness to these three states of existence (24). This whole visible/invisible creation has

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risen from you, is sustained by you and merges (coalesces) back into you. That is why you are the primary cause (the essence, reality, elementary source, the truth) of all that exists (25).

रज्जावहिमिवात्मानं जीवं ज्ञात्वा भयं भवेत्। परात्माहमिति ज्ञात्वा भयदुःखैर्विमुच्यते।। 26।।
चिन्मात्रज्योतिषा सर्वाः सर्वदेहेषु बुद्धयः। त्वया यस्मात्प्रकाश्यन्ते सर्वस्यात्मा ततो भवान्।।27।।

rajjāvahimivātmānaṃ jīvaṃ jñātvā bhayaṃ bhavet /
parātmāhamiti jñātvā bhayaduḥkhairvimucyate //
cinmātrajyotiṣā sarvāḥ sarvadeheṣu buddhayaḥ /
tvayā yasmātprakāśyante sarvasyātmā tato bhavān //

Even as the illusion of a snake in a rope creates mortal fear of it, the misleading belief (i.e. deceptive and erroneous thought) that this 'Jiva' (creature with a physical body) is 'me' (as in verses 20-23) creates false fear in a person. Otherwise, when he realises that he is the 'Parmatma' (the macrocosmic, supreme Soul itself in a microcosmic form), he is liberated from all fears and sorrows, all consternations and perplexities associated with this mundane, deluding world. This realisation removes the veils of deception and illusions sheathing (enveloping, covering) his discrimination faculty, intellect, mind and wisdom, and it is called enlightenment (26). Since you reside inside the body of all in the form of a divine spark of life and a light of pure, divine and sublime consciousness and illuminate the mind-intellect complex, therefore it is you who is their soul, i.e. the life-giving force, or the real/truthful identity, or Atma of the creature. This Atma, which is the pure consciousness, is called the 'true self' (27).

अज्ञानान्न्यस्यते सर्वं त्वयि रज्जौ भुजङ्गवत्। त्वज्ज्ञानाल्लीयते सर्वं तस्माज्ज्ञानं सदाभ्यसेत्।। 28।।
त्वत्पादभक्तियुक्तानां विज्ञानं भवति क्रमात्। तस्मात्त्वद्भक्तियुक्ता ये मुक्तिभाजस्त एव हि।। 29।।

ajñānānnyasyate sarvaṃ tvayi rajjo bhujaṅgavat /
tvajjñānāllīyate sarvaṃ tasmājjñānaṃ sadābhyaset //
tvatpādabhaktiyuktānāṃ vijñānaṃ bhavati kramāt /
tasmāttvadbhaktiyuktā ye muktibhājasta eva hi //

Like the illusion of a serpent (or the imagination of a serpent) in a rope, the whole world is imagined to be present in you due to ignorance. Hence, when the true nature of your supreme, sublime, ethereal and transcendental 'Being' is realised and understood, this illusionary and deceptive imagination also vanishes. That is why a

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seeker should practice 'Gyan' (pursuit of the truth, the essential, basic, elementary nature of existence, its cause and effect, its origin and end, based on analysis and sound thinking, not distracted by illusionary or misleading inputs; acquisition of correct wisdom and having deep insight into reality) (28). Only those persons who are blessed and fortunate to be endowed (possessed) with your dedicated devotion and have unwavering faith and conviction in you can ever expect to achieve true knowledge (Gyan). And since wisdom, enlightenment and realisation are the paths to emancipation and salvation, hence those who are possessed of your Bhakti can only expect to have deliverance and liberation from the world (29).

अहं त्वद्भक्तभक्तानां तद्भक्तानां च किङ्करः। अतो मामनुगृह्णीष्व मोहयस्व न मां प्रभो।। 30।।
त्वन्नाभिकमलोत्पन्नो ब्रह्मा मे जनकः प्रभो। अतस्त्वाहं पौत्रोऽस्मि भक्तं मां पाहि राघव।।31।।

ahaṃ tvadbhaktabhaktānāṃ tadbhaktānāṃ ca kiṅkaraḥ /
ato māmanugṛhṇīṣva mohayasva na māṃ prabho //
tvannābhikamalotpanno brahmā me janakaḥ prabho /
atastavāhaṃ pautro'smi bhaktaṃ māṃ pāhi rāghava //

Oh Lord! I am a servant (follower) of those who are, in turn, devotees (followers) of those who follow your (true, sincere, ardent, diligent, unwavering and realised) other devotees. [That is, I am a 4th rung devotee.] So, please do not cast your magical spell of delusions on me (in order to check my aptitude and sincerity, because I'd fail miserably in it as I am not well qualified and am simply a humble servant of yours). But instead, show your grace, munificence and benevolence upon me (30). Oh Lord! Brahma, who was born on a divine lotus which had emerged from your navel, is my father—hence, I am your grandson. So, oh Raghav (Sri Ram), you should save and protect me, who am your devotee (and relative)' (31).

[Note :—verse nos. 10-31 can be called 'Narad Gita' or the Gospel of Narad. See also Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 20-33.]

इत्युक्त्वा बहुशो नत्वा स्वानन्दाश्रुपरिप्लुतः। उवाच वचनं राम ब्रह्मणा नोदितोऽस्म्यहम्।। 32।।
रावणस्य वधार्थाय जातोऽसि रघुसत्तम। इदानीं राज्यरक्षार्थं पिता त्वामभिषेक्ष्यति।। 33।।

ityuktvā bahuśo natvā svānandāśrupariplutaḥ /
uvāca vacanaṃ rāma brahmaṇā nodito'smyaham //
rāvaṇasya vadhārthāya jāto'si raghusattama /
idānīṃ rājyarakṣārthaṃ pitā tvāmbhiṣekṣyati //

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Saying so and repeatedly bowing his head in reverence, Narad's eyes were filled with tears of joy and exhilaration. He said, 'Oh the best in the clan of Raghu (Sri Ram)! Lord Brahma has sent me to you. You have incarnated (i.e. revealed yourself) with the express purpose of slaying the demon Ravana, but now your father Dashrath wants to anoint you as prince regent to take charge of the administration of the kingdom (32-33).

यदि राज्याभिसंसक्तो रावणं न हनिष्यसि। प्रतिज्ञा ते कृता राम भूभारहरणाय वै।। 34।।
तत्सत्यं कुरु राजेन्द्र सत्यसंधस्त्वमेव हि। श्रुत्वैतद्गदितं रामो नारदं प्राह सस्मितम्।। 35।।

yadi rājyābhisaṁsakto rāvaṇaṃ na haniṣyasi /
pratijñā te kṛtā rāma bhūbhāraharaṇāya vai //
tatsatyaṃ kuru rājendra satyasaṁdhastvameva hi /
śrutvaitadgaditaṃ rāmo nāradaṃ prāha sasmitam //

Oh Sri Ram! Once being enthroned and engrossed in the work of the kingdom, you will not be able to slay Ravana. What will happen to your promise that you had made to the Gods about removing the burden of the earth by slaying him? (34). So oh King of kings! Make your promise come true because you are expeditious, steadfast and unwavering in upholding truthfulness'. Hearing these words of sage Narad, Sri Ram smiled and said (35)—

शृणु नारद मे किञ्चिद्विद्यतेऽविदितं क्वचित्। प्रतिज्ञातं च यत्पूर्वं करिष्ये तन्न संशयः।। 36।।
किन्तु कालानुरोधेन तत्तत्प्रारब्धसंक्षयात्। हरिष्ये सर्वभूभारं क्रमेणासुरमण्डलम्।। 37।।
रावणस्य विनाशार्थं श्वो गन्ता दण्डकाननम्। चतुर्दश समास्तत्र ह्युषित्वा मुनिवेषधृक्।। 38।।

śṛṇu nārada me kiñcidvidyate'viditaṃ kvacit /
pratijñātaṃ ca yatpūrvaṃ kariṣye tanna saṁśayaḥ //
kintu kālānurodhena tattatprārabdhasaṁkṣayāt /
hariṣye sarvabhūbhāraṃ krameṇāsuramaṇḍalam //
rāvaṇasya vināśārthaṃ śvo gantā daṇḍakānanam /
caturdaśa samāstatra hyuṣitvā muniveṣadhṛk //

'Oh Narad, listen. Is there anything about which I don't know? I shall without doubt diligently fulfill all that I have promised earlier (i.e. I'll keep my promise made to the Gods) (36). But it has to be gradual process—I shall progressively slay the demons one by one as their destiny ordains (or, in other words, as the good or bad effects of their past deeds come to an end), and I shall thereby remove the burden

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of the earth (37). In order to kill Ravana, I shall proceed to the Dandakaranya forest tomorrow and shall live there disguised as a hermit for the next fourteen years (38).

सीतामिषेण तं दुष्टं सकुलं नाशयाम्यहम्। एवं रामे प्रतिज्ञाते नारदः प्रमुमोद ह।। 39।।
प्रदक्षिणत्रयं कृत्वा दण्डवत्प्रणिपत्य तम्। अनुज्ञातश्च रामेण ययौ देवगतिं मुनिः।। 40।।

sītāmiṣeṇa taṃ duṣṭaṃ sakulaṃ nāśayāmyaham /
evaṃ rāme pratijñāte nāradaḥ pramumoda ha //
pradakṣiṇatrayaṃ kṛtvā daṇḍavatpraṇipatya tam /
anujñātaśca rāmeṇa yayau devagatiṃ muniḥ //

I shall destroy that wicked fellow along with his entire clan on the excuse of Sita's abduction'. Narad was extremely pleased and exhilarated by Sri Ram making such a vow (39). After that, he circumambulated Sri Ram three times, prostrated before him, and obtaining his permission, he departed by the path of the sky to the abode of Gods (40).

संवादं पठति शृणोति संस्मरेद्वा यो नित्यं मुनिवररामयोः स भक्त्या।
संप्राप्नोत्यमरसुदुर्लभं विमोक्षं कैवल्यं विरतिपुरःसरं क्रमेण।। 41।।

saṁvādaṃ paṭhati śṛṇoti saṁsmaredvā
yo nityaṃ munivararāmayoḥ sa bhaktyā /
saṃprāpnotyamarasudurlabhaṃ vimokṣaṃ
kaivalyaṃ viratipuraḥsaraṃ krameṇa //

That person who diligently, sincerely and with due devotion, reverence, faith, conviction and belief reads, hears or remembers daily this dialogue between sage Narad and Sri Ram, gains detachment and renunciation from this mundane, deluding, entrapping world and attains that supreme and only truthful stature called 'Moksha' (liberation and deliverance of the soul from this mundane, deluding world; emancipation and salvation), a stature which is most difficult even for the Gods to attain or achieve (41).

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Ayodhya Kand — Canto 2

Preparation for crowning of Sri Ram; Conversation between him and sage Vashistha; Manthara incites Kaikeyi

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

अथ राजा दशरथः कदाचिद्रहसि स्थितः। वसिष्ठं स्वकुलाचार्यमाहूयेदमभाषत।।1।।
भगवन् राममखिलाः प्रशंसन्ति मुहुर्मुहुः। पौराश्च निगमा वृद्धा मन्त्रिणश्च विशेषतः।।2।।
ततः सर्वगुणोपेतं रामं राजीवलोचनम्। ज्येष्ठं राज्येऽभिषेक्ष्यामि वृद्धोऽहं मुनिपुङ्गव।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

atha rājā daśarathaḥ kadācidrahasi sthitaḥ /
vasiṣṭhaṃ svakulācāryamāhūyedamabhāṣata //
bhagavan rāmamakhilāḥ praśaṁsanti muhurmuhuḥ /
paurāśca nigamā vṛddhā mantriṇaśca viśeṣataḥ //
tataḥ sarvaguṇopetaṃ rāmaṃ rājīvalocanam /
jyeṣṭhaṃ rājye'bhiṣekṣyāmi vṛddho'haṃ munipuṅgava //

Lord Shiva said—'One day, while sitting alone, king Dashrath called his clan's priest, Guru Vashistha, and said (1)—'Oh Bhagwan (i.e. oh respected, revered one; oh Lord)! All the citizens, the elderly ones who are well versed in the Vedas (i.e. are learned) and the ministers praise Sri Ram repeatedly (2). So, oh the most exalted sage, it is my thought (wish) that since I have become old, I should put my eldest son, the lotus-eyed Sri Ram, who possesses all good characters and virtues, on the throne (3).

भरतो मातुलं द्रष्टुं गतः शत्रुघ्नसंयुतः। अभिषेक्ष्ये श्व एवाशु भवांस्तच्चानुमोदताम्।।4।।
सम्भाराः सम्भ्रियन्तां च गच्छ मन्त्रय राघवम्। उच्छ्रीयन्तां पताकाश्च नानावर्णाः समन्ततः।।5।।

bharato mātulaṃ draṣṭuṃ gataḥ śatrughnasaṁyutaḥ /
abhiṣekṣye śva evāśu bhavāṁstaccānumodatām //
sambhārāḥ sambhriyantāṃ ca gaccha mantraya rāghavam /
ucchrīyantāṃ patākāśca nānāvarṇāḥ samantataḥ //

At this time, Bharat and Shatrughan have gone to pay a visit to their maternal uncle's place, but still I want to anoint Sri Ram on the throne tomorrow itself. Give me your consent on this matter (4). Oh the best among sages! You should make arrangements for collecting

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all the paraphernalia and accoutrements required for the purpose of his anointment, and you should go to Raghav (Sri Ram) and advise him accordingly. Multi coloured flags and buntings should be put up in the city in all the directions (to celebrate the occasion) (5).

[Note—This very fact that Ram's other brothers, Bharat and Shatrughan, were not present there convinced his step mother Kaikeyi that some conspiracy was hatched against her and her son Bharat by anointing Sri Ram in such great haste. Perhaps Dashrath was aware that it was improper to appoint one brother on the throne in the absence of others because it would give an opportunity to malicious gossip and cooked up theories.]

तोरणानि विचित्राणि स्वर्णमुक्तामयानि वै। आहूय मन्त्रिणं राजा सुमन्त्रं मन्त्रिसत्तमम्॥6॥
आज्ञापयति यद्यत्त्वां मुनिस्तत्तत्समानय। यौवराज्येऽभिषेक्ष्यामि श्वोभूते रघुनन्दनम्॥7॥

toraṇāni vicitrāṇi svarṇamuktāmayāni vai /
āhūya mantriṇaṃ rājā sumantraṃ mantrisattamam //
ājñāpayati yadyattvāṃ munistattatsamānaya /
yauvarājye'bhiṣekṣyāmi śvobhūte raghunandanam //

Besides that, golden and pearl bedecked festoons and hangings of various hues, shapes and sizes should be tied everywhere'. Then the king summoned the best among his ministers, Sumantra, and informed him that he would anoint Raghunandan (Sri Ram) as the prince-regent the next day, and ordered him to collect all the accoutrements for that ceremony as decreed (advised, prescribed) by sage Vashistha (6-7).

तथेति हर्षात्स मुनिं किं करोमीत्यभाषत। तमुवाच महातेजा वसिष्ठो ज्ञानिनां वरः॥8॥
श्वः प्रभाते मध्यकक्षे कन्यकाः स्वर्णभूषिताः। तिष्ठन्तु षोडश गजः स्वर्णरत्नादिभूषितः॥9॥
चतुर्दन्तः समायातु ऐरावतकुलोद्भवः। नानातीर्थोदकैः पूर्णाः स्वर्णकुम्भाः सहस्त्रशः॥10॥

tatheti harṣātsa muniṃ kiṃ karomītyabhāṣata /
tamuvāca mahātejā vasiṣṭho jñānināṃ varaḥ //
śvaḥ prabhāte madhyakakṣe kanyakāḥ svarṇabhūṣitāḥ /
tiṣṭhantu ṣoḍaśa gajāḥ svarṇaratnādibhūṣitāḥ //
caturdantaḥ samāyātu airāvatakulodbhavaḥ /
nānātīrthodakaiḥ pūrṇāḥ svarṇakumbhāḥ sahasraśaḥ //

Saying 'alright', Sumantra gladly asked sage Vashistha what was to be done. Then the sage, who was the best among the wise, learned ones and most brilliant in knowledge, said to him (8), 'Tomorrow morning, sixteen virgin girls fully decorated with golden ornaments

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should be stationed at the central gate of the palace, and a four-tusked elephant which has the pedigree of Erawat elephant should be fully decorated with jewels etc. and placed similarly alongside them (the girls) at the gate. Thousands of golden pitchers full of holy waters from different pilgrim cities should be collected at the site (9-10).

स्थाप्यन्तां नववैयाघ्रचर्माणि त्रीणि चानय। श्वेतच्छत्रं रत्नदण्डं मुक्तामणिविराजितम्।। 11।।
दिव्यमाल्यानि वस्त्राणि दिव्यान्याभरणानि च। मुनयः सत्कृतास्तत्र तिष्ठन्तु कुशपाणयः।। 12।।
नर्तक्यो वारमुख्याश्च गायका वेणुकास्तथा। नानावादित्रकुशला वादयन्तु नृपाङ्गणे।। 13।।

sthāpyantāṃ navavaiyāghracarmāṇi trīṇi cānaya /
śvetacchatraṃ ratnadaṇḍaṃ muktāmaṇivirājitam //
divyamālyāni vastrāṇi divyānyābharaṇāni ca /
munayaḥ satkṛtāstatra tiṣṭhantu kuśapāṇayaḥ //
nartakyo vāramukhyāśca gāyakā veṇukāstathā /
nānāvāditrakuśalā vādayantu nṛpāṅgaṇe //

Bring three new tiger skins and a parasol (or a ceremonial umbrella) with a gem-studded handle and embellished with 'Mukta Mani' (a type of pearl) (11). Numerous magnificent and beautiful garlands, ceremonial clothes/garments/robes and a variety of ornaments should be brought and kept ready, while many sages and seers, who had been duly honoured previously, should be ready with the 'Kush' (a type of grass or reed used in religious rituals) in hand at the anointment site (12). Numerous female dancers, chief female singers, courtesans, expert musicians and players of the Indian lute who are present in the city, should commence singing, dancing and playing their various musical instruments in the royal forecourt forthwith (13).

हस्त्यश्वरथपादाता बहिस्तिष्ठन्तु सायुधाः। नगरे यानि तिष्ठन्ति देवतायतनानि च।। 14।।
तेषु प्रवर्ततां पूजा नानाबलिभिरादृता। राजानः शीघ्रमायान्तु नानोपायनपाणयः।। 15।।

hastyaśvarathapādātā bahistiṣṭhantu sāyudhāḥ /
nagare yāni tiṣṭhanti devatāyatanāni ca //
teṣu pravartatāṃ pūjā nānābalibhirādṛtā /
rājānaḥ śīghramāyāntu nānopāyanapāṇayaḥ //

Outside the coronation arena where the anointment ceremony would be held, the four wings of the army—viz. elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers—should be fully armed and be at the ready. In all the temples in the city, the presiding deities should be

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worshipped with necessary sacrifices and offerings, while all the kings of the realm should come soon with various gifts and tributes' (14-15).

इत्यादिश्य मुनिः श्रीमान् सुमन्त्रं नृपमन्त्रिणम्। स्वयं जगाम भवनं राघवस्यातिशोभनम्।। 16।।
रथमारुह्य भगवान्वसिष्ठो मुनिसत्तमः। त्रीणी कक्षाण्यतिक्रम्य रथात्क्षितिमवातरत्।। 17।।

ityādiśya muniḥ śrīmān sumantraṃ nṛpamantriṇam /
svayaṃ jagāma bhavanaṃ rāghavasyātiśobhanam //
rathamāruhya bhagavānvasiṣṭho munisattamaḥ /
trīṇi kakṣāṇyatikramya rathātkṣitimavātarat //

Having commanded the royal minister Sumantra as above (verse nos. 8-15), sage Vashistha himself proceeded to the palace of Raghav (Sri Ram) (16). The most exalted sage mounted a chariot and crossed the first three gates of the palace and then dismounted (17).

अन्तः प्रविश्य भवनं स्वाचार्यत्वादवारितः। गुरुमागतमाज्ञाय रामस्तूर्णं कृताञ्जलिः।। 18।।
प्रत्युद्गम्य नमस्कृत्य दण्डवद् भक्तिसंयुतः। स्वर्णपात्रेण पानीयमानिनायाशु जानकी।। 19।।

antaḥ praviśya bhavanaṃ svācāryatvādavāritaḥ /
gurumāgatamājñāya rāmastūrṇaḥ kṛtāñjaliḥ //
pratyudgamya namaskṛtya daṇḍavad bhaktisaṁyutaḥ /
svarṇapātreṇa pānīyamānināyāśu jānakī //

Since he was the chief priest, he went straight unopposed inside the palace. Seeing that his Guru has arrived, Sri Ram immediately stood up to welcome him with palms joined together in submission, and prostrated before him with reverence. Just at that time, Janki (Sita) brought water in a golden pot (18-19).

रत्नासने समावेश्य पादौ प्रक्षाल्य भक्तितः। तदपः शिरसा धृत्वा सीतया सह राघवः।। 20।।
धन्योऽस्मीत्यब्रवीद्रामस्तव पादाम्बुधारणात्। श्रीरामेणैवमुक्तस्तु प्रहसन्मुनिरब्रवीत्।। 21।।

ratnāsane samāveśya pādau prakṣālya bhaktitaḥ /
tadapaḥ śirasā dhṛtvā sītayā saha rāghavaḥ //
dhanyo'smītyabravīdrāmastava pādāmbudhāraṇāt /
śrīrāmeṇaivamuktastu prahasanmunirabravīt //

Then Raghav (Sri Ram) seated him on a jewel-studded throne and washed his feet, and putting that washed water on his head along with Sita, said, 'Oh sage! I feel very privileged by putting the water

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used to wash your feet on my head'. When Sri Ram said this, sage Vashistha smiled enigmatically and replied (20-21)—

त्वत्पादसलिलं धृत्वा धन्योऽभूद्गिरिजापतिः। ब्रह्मापि मत्पिता ते हि पादतीर्थहताशुभः।।22।।
इदानीं भाषसे यत्त्वं लोकानामुपदेशकृत्। जानामि त्वां परात्मानं लक्ष्म्या संजातमीश्वरम्।।23।।

tvatpādasalilaṃ dhṛtvā dhanyo'bhūdgirijāpatiḥ /
brahmāpi matpitā te hi pādatīrthahatāśubhaḥ //
idānīṃ bhāṣase yattvaṃ lokānāmupadeśakṛt /
jānāmi tvāṃ parātmānaṃ lakṣmyā saṁjātamīśvaram //

'Oh Sri Ram! Lord Shiva, the husband of Parvati, had felt highly grateful, fortunate and privileged by keeping the water used to wash your feet on his head (a reference to river Ganges), while my own father (Brahma, the creator) had become freed of all sins and misdemeanours by drinking it (22). Just in order to show the world what treatment should be meted out to one's Guru, you are talking in this manner (verse nos. 20-21). I know it fully well that you are a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, who is Parmatma (Supreme Being or supreme Soul), along with Laxmi (who has become Sita) (23).

देवकार्यार्थसिद्ध्यर्थं भक्तानां भक्तिसिद्धये। रावणस्य वधार्थाय जातं जानामि राघव।।24।।
तथापि देवकार्यार्थं गुह्यं नोद्घाटयाम्यहम्। यथा त्वं मायया सर्वं करोषि रघुनन्दन।।25।।
तथैवानुविधास्येऽहं शिष्यस्त्वं गुरुरप्यहम्। गुरुर्गुरूणां त्वं देव पितॄणां त्वं पितामहः।।26।।

devakāryārthasiddhyarthaṃ bhaktānāṃ bhaktisiddhaye /
rāvaṇasya vadhārthāya jātaṃ jānāmi rāghava //
tathāpi devakāryārthṃ guhyaṃ nodghāṭayāmyaham /
yathā tvaṃ māyayā sarvaṃ karoṣi raghunandana //
tathaivānuvidhāsye'haṃ śiṣyastvaṃ gururapyaham /
gururgurūṇāṃ tvaṃ deva pitṝṇāṃ tvaṃ pitāmahaḥ //

Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! I know it that you have appeared as an incarnation with the object of doing the job of the Gods, to make successful the devotion of your devotees, and to slay Ravana (24), though I should not have divulged this secret to ensure success in the fulfillment of the objects of the Gods (because Ravana should not get a hint that you are not an ordinary prince). Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Even as you will behave like an ordinary prince using your illusionary/deceptive powers called Maya, I too shall treat you as my

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disciple and myself as your Guru (so that the secret is maintained). But, oh God, in reality, you are the true Guru of all the gurus put together, and the great grandfather of all the ancestors (25-26).

अन्तर्यामी जगद्यात्रावाहकस्त्वमगोचरः। शुद्धसत्त्वमयं देहं धृत्वा स्वाधीनसम्भवम्।। 27।।
मनुष्य इव लोकेऽस्मिन् भासि त्वं योगमायया। पौरोहित्यमहं जाने विगर्ह्यं दूष्यजीवनम्।।28।।

antaryāmī jagadyātrāvāhakastvamagocaraḥ /
śuddhasattvamayaṃ dehaṃ dhṛtvā svādhīnasambhavam //
manuṣya iva loke'smin bhāsi tvaṃ yogamāyayā /
paurohityamahaṃ jāne vigarhyaṃ dūṣyajīvanam //

You are wise, all knowing and omniscient, so much so that you know the internal thoughts of all, are the one who has established the ethical codes of behaviour in this world, and are not the subject of (discussion, debate or comprehension by) the mind, intellect and speech. You have assumed this body which is an image of purity, truthfulness and divinity, and it is sinless and uncorrupt. You have assumed a human form out of your own free will. I know that the profession (or vocation) of being a priest is most lowly, abhorable, detestable, contemptible, corrupt, shameful and ignoble means of livelihood (27-28).

इक्ष्वाकूणां कुले रामः परमात्मा जनिष्यते। इति ज्ञातं मया पूर्वं ब्रह्मणा कथितं पुरा।। 29।।
ततोऽहमाशया राम तव सम्बन्धकाङ्क्षया। अकार्षं गर्हितमपि तवाचार्यत्वसिद्धये।। 30।।

ikṣvākūṇāṃ kule rāmaḥ paramātmā janiṣyate /
iti jñātaṃ mayā pūrvaṃ brahmaṇā kathitaṃ purā //
tato'hamāśayā rāma tava sambandhakāṅkṣayā /
akārṣaṃ garhitamapi tavācāryatvasiddhaye //

Inspite of this reprehensible job and ignominy associated with such a profession, when I came to learn from Lord Brahma in some previous time that the Parmatma (the supreme Lord) shall take an incarnation and reveal himself in the clan of king Ikshwaku (29), then oh Sri Ram, in order to establish a personal relationship with you, I accepted this contemptible, shameful and hateful post of being a priest, and that is why I decided to become the chief priest of your clan (30).

ततो मनोरथो मेऽद्य फलितो रघुनन्दन। त्वदधीना महामाया सर्वलोकैकमोहिनी।। 31।।
मां यथा मोहयेत्रैव तथा कुरु रघूद्वह। गुरुनिष्कृतिकामस्त्वं यदि देह्येतदेव मे।। 32।।

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tato manoratho me'dya phalito raghunandana /
tvadadhīnā mahāmāyā sarvalokaikamohinī //
māṃ yathā mohayennaiva tathā kuru raghūdvaha /
guruniṣkṛtikāmastvaṃ yadi dehyetadeva me //

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Today, my wishes have been fulfilled. If, now, you wish to absolve (free) yourself from the moral debt of a Guru (moral preceptor), then give me the assurance that your 'Maha Maya'—the great deluding power which can keep the whole world enthralled in its spell and which remains under your command—should never ever cast its spell on me (i.e. I should be free from it) (31-32).

प्रसङ्गात्सर्वमप्युक्तं न वाच्यं कुत्रचिन्मया। राज्ञा दशरथेनाहं प्रेषितोऽस्मि रघूद्वह।। 33।।
त्वामामन्त्रयितुं राज्ये श्वोऽभिषेक्ष्यति राघव। अद्य त्वं सीतया सार्धमुपवासं यथाविधि।।34।।
कृत्वा शुचिर्भूमिशायी भव राम जितेन्द्रियः। गच्छामि राजसान्निध्यं त्वं तु प्रातर्गमिष्यसि।।35।।

prasaṅgātsarvamapyuktaṃ na vācyaṃ kutracinmayā /
rājñā daśarathenāhaṃ preṣito'smi raghūdvaha //
tvāmāmantrayituṃ rājye śvo'bhiṣekṣyati rāghava /
adya tvaṃ sītayā sārdhamupavāsaṃ yathāvidhi //
kṛtvā śucirbhūmiśāyī bhava rāma jitendriyaḥ /
gacchāmi rājasānnidhyaṃ tvaṃ tu prātargamiṣyasi //

I have said these things just by the way because the subject arose; otherwise I shall never say such things anywhere else again. Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! King Dashrath has requested me to convey to you the news that he wishes to appoint you on the throne (as prince regent) tomorrow. To prepare for it, you should fast along with Sita, and sleep on the floor exercising self restraint and observing purity of thought. Now I shall proceed back to the king; you present yourself tomorrow morning at the venue' (33-35).

इत्युक्त्वा रथमारुह्य ययौ राजगुरुर्द्रुतम्। रामोऽपि लक्ष्मणं दृष्ट्वा प्रहसन्निदमब्रवीत्।। 36।।
सौमित्रे यौवराज्ये मे श्वोऽभिषेको भविष्यति। निमित्तमात्रमेवाहं कर्ता भोक्ता त्वमेव हि।।37।।
मम त्वं हि बहिःप्राणो नात्र कार्या विचारणा। ततो वसिष्ठेन यथा भाषितं तत्तथाकरोत्।।38।।

ityuktvā rathamāruhya yayau rājagururdrutam /
rāmo'pi lakṣmaṇaṃ dṛṣṭvā prahasannidamabravīt //
saumitre yauvarājye me śvo'bhiṣeko bhaviṣyati /
nimittamātramevāhaṃ kartā bhoktā tvameva hi //

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mama tvaṃ bahiḥprāṇo nātra kāryā vicāraṇā /
tato vasiṣṭhena yathā bhāṣitaṃ tattathākarot //

Saying thus, the royal priest mounted his chariot and went immediately from there. Then Sri Ram looked at Laxman and smilingly said (36) 'Oh the son of Sumitra (Laxman)! Tomorrow I shall be anointed as a prince regent, but I shall be only a token, a passive prince regent, for all the deeds and their rewards shall be done and enjoyed by you (37) because my external being (literally, my active part) is you. There is nothing to think twice or doubt much about it any further'. After that Sri Ram did what sage Vashistha had advised him to do (as in verses nos. 33-35) (38).

वसिष्ठोऽपि नृपं गत्वा कृतं सर्वं न्यवेदयत्। वसिष्ठस्य पुरो राज्ञा ह्युक्तं रामाभिषेचनम्।। 39।।
यदा तदैव नगरे श्रुत्वा कश्चित्पुमान् जगौ। कौसल्यायै राममात्रे सुमित्रायै तथैव च।। 40।।

vasiṣṭho'pi nṛpaṃ gatvā kṛtaṃ sarvaṃ nyavedayat /
vasiṣṭhasya puro rājñā hyuktaṃ rāmābhiṣecanam //
yadā tadaiva nagare śrutvā kaścitpumān jagau /
kausalyāyai rāmamātre sumitrāyai tathaiva ca //

Here meanwhile, sage Vashistha went straight to the king and told him everything. At the time when Dashrath was first instructing Vashistha about his desires (as in verse no. 4), some courtier overheard it and the news spread like wildfire in the city, and he also informed Sri Ram's mother Kaushalya as well as Sumitra (the mother of Laxman) (39-40).

श्रुत्वा ते हर्षसम्पूर्णे ददतुर्हारमुत्तमम्। तस्मै ततः प्रीतमनाः कौसल्या पुत्रवत्सला।। 41।।
लक्ष्मीं पर्यचरद्देवीं रामस्यार्थप्रसिद्धये। सत्यवादी दशरथः करोत्येव प्रतिश्रुतम्।। 42।।
कैकेयीवशगः किन्तु कामुकः किं करिष्यति। इति व्याकुलचित्ता सा दुर्गां देवीमपूजयत्।।43।।

śrutvā te harṣasampūrṇe dadaturhāramuttamam /
tasmai tataḥ prītamanā kausalyā putravatsalā //
lakṣmīṃ paryacaraddevīṃ rāmasyārthaprasiddhaye /
satyavādī daśarathaḥ karotyeva pratiśrutam //
kaikeyīvaśagaḥ kintu kāmukaḥ kiṃ kariṣyati /
iti vyākulacittā sā durgāṃ devīmapūjayat //

When the two heard it, they rewarded the messenger with a most beautiful and priceless garland (or necklace). After that Kaushalya,

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who loved her son very dearly, worshipped Laxmi for the welfare and success of Sri Ram. Kaushalya wondered, 'Dashrath is true to his words and it is famous and renowned about him that he keeps his vows (41-42), but at the same time, he is lustful and infatuated with Kaikeyi. In this condition, will he be able to fulfill his vows and keep his words?' Worried by these gloomy thoughts, she started offering worship to Goddess Durga (to help overcome this great hurdle) (43).

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे देवा देवीं वाणीमचोदन्। गच्छ देवि भुवो लोकमयोध्यायां प्रयत्नतः।।44।।
रामाभिषेकविघ्नार्थं यतस्व ब्रह्मवाक्यतः। मन्थरां प्रविशस्वादौ कैकेयीं च ततः परम्।।45।।
ततो विघ्ने समुत्पन्ने पुनरेहि दिवं शुभे। तथेत्युक्त्वा तथा चक्रे प्रविवेशाथ मन्थराम्।।46।।

etasminnantare devā devīṃ vāṇīmacodayan /
gaccha devi bhuvo lokamayodhyāyāṃ prayatnataḥ //
rāmābhiṣekavighnārthaṃ yatasvaṃ brahmavākyataḥ /
mantharāṃ praviśasvādau kaikeyīṃ ca tataḥ param //
tato vighne samutpanne punarehi divaṃ śubhe /
tathetyuktvā tathā cakre praviveśātha mantharām //

Just at that time, the Gods prayed and pleaded with Saraswati (the goddess of speech, wisdom and intelligence), 'Oh goddess! You should go to Ayodhya in the terrestrial world (44). There, on the command of Lord Brahma, you should make necessary arrangements (or do something) so that an obstacle (i.e. a hurdle, or a spanner in the wheel, so to say) is created in the anointment of Sri Ram on the throne of Ayodhya. At first you enter and pollute the mind and intellect of Manthara (the haunch-back maid of Kaikeyi), and next of Kaikeyi (to corrupt her discrimination faculty and wisdom) (45). Oh the auspicious one! Having thus created a hindrance, an obstacle, in Sri Ram's anointment, you should come back to the heavens'. At this, Saraswati said 'alright' and did as she was told. She entered Manthara's mind first (46).

सापि कुब्जा त्रिवक्रा तु प्रासादाग्रमथारुहत्। नगरं परितो दृष्ट्वा सर्वतः समलङ्कृतम्।।47।।
नानातोरणसम्बाधं पताकाभिरलङ्कृतम्। सर्वोत्सवसमायुक्तं विस्मिता पुनरागमत्।।48।।

sāpi kubjā trivakrā tu prāsādāgramathāruhat /
nagaraṃ parito dṛṣṭvā sarvataḥ samalaṅkṛtam //
nānātoraṇasambādhaṃ patākābhiralaṅkṛtam/
sarvotsavasamāyuktaṃ vismitā punarāgamat //

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Manthara, who was bent in the body at three places and was a haunch-back, strode atop the terrace of the palace and saw that the city had been decorated from all sides (47). There were different types of festoons, buntings tied here and there, multicoloured flags and banners were fluttering everywhere, and festivities were apparent. Seeing this, she was astonished and came down (48).

धात्रीं पप्रच्छ मातः किं नगरं समलङ्कृतम्। नानोत्सवसमायुक्ता कौसल्या चातिहर्षिता।। 49 ।।
ददाति विप्रमुख्येभ्यो वस्त्राणि विविधानि च। तामुवाच तदा धात्री रामचन्द्राभिषेचनम्।। 50 ।।
श्वो भविष्यति तेनाद्य सर्वतोऽलङ्कृतं पुरम्। तच्छ्रुत्वा त्वरितं गत्वा कैकेयीं वाक्यमब्रवीत्।। 51 ।।

dhātrīṃ papraccha mātaḥ kiṃ nagaraṃ samalaṅkṛtam /
nānotsavasamāyuktā kausalyā cātiharṣitā //
dadāti vipramukhyebhyo vastrāṇi vividhāni ca /
tāmuvāca tadā dhātrī rāmacandrābhiṣecanam //
śvo bhaviṣyati tenādya sarvato'laṅkṛtaṃ puram /
tacchrutvā tvaritaṃ gatvā kaikeyīṃ vākyamabravīt //

She asked a junior old maid servant (or a palace nurse called 'Dhatri'), 'Oh mother! Why has the city been so decorated today, and why is queen Kaushalya celebrating most joyfully, and so cheerfully giving away various ornaments and garments to Brahmins?' The nurse (the old maid) replied, 'Tomorrow, Sri Ram would be anointed on the throne; this is the reason why the city has been decorated from all sides'. As soon as Manthara heard it, she went to her mistress Kaikeyi (49-51).

पर्यङ्कस्थां विशालाक्षीमेकान्ते पर्यवस्थिताम्। किं शेषे दुर्भगे मूढे महद्भयमुपस्थितम्।। 52 ।।
न जानीषेऽतिसौन्दर्यमानिनी मत्तगामिनी।। 53 ।।

paryaṅkasthāṃ viśālākṣīmekānte paryavasthitām /
kiṃ śeṣe durbhage mūḍhe mahadbhayamupasthitam //
na jānīṣe'tisaundaryamāninī mattagāminī //

Kaikeyi, who was endowed with broad eyes, was sitting alone on a bedstead. Manthara went to her and said, 'Oh you most unfortunate idiot. How do you dare to sleep—a grave trouble has come to you (52). Oh the one with a majestic gait! You are very proud of your beauty, and that is why you are not concerned about anything (53).

रामस्यानुग्रहाद्राज्ञः श्वोऽभिषेको भविष्यति। तच्छ्रुत्वा सहसोत्थाय कैकेयी प्रियवादिनी।। 54 ।।
तस्यै दिव्यं ददौ स्वर्णनूपुरं रत्नभूषितम्। हर्षस्थाने किमिति मे कथ्यते भयमागतम्।। 55 ।।

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rāmasyānugrahādrājñaḥ śvo'bhiṣeko bhaviṣyati /
tacchrutvā sahasotthāya kaikeyī priyavādinī //
tasyai divyaṃ dadau svarṇanūpuraṃ ratnabhūṣitam /
harṣasthāne kimiti me kathyate bhayamāgatam //

By the grace of the king (Dashrath), Sri Ram is being anointed on the throne of the kingdom tomorrow'. Hearing this, the soft-spoken Kaikeyi stood up joyfully with a start (54), and gave her a jewel-studded golden anklet, and exclaimed, 'Oh you! This is very happy news for me. How come you call it the appearance (or onset) of troubles for me? (55).

भरतादधिको रामः प्रियकृन्मे प्रियंवदः। कौसल्यां मां समं पश्यन् सदा शुश्रूषते हि माम्।। 56।।
रामाद्भयं किमापन्नं तव मूढे वदस्व मे। तच्छ्रुत्वा विषसादाथ कुब्जाकारणवैरिणी।। 57।।
शृणु मद्वचनं देयि यथार्थं ते महद्भयम्। त्वां तोषयन् सदा राजा प्रियवाक्यानि भाषते।।58।।

bharatādhiko rāmaḥ priyakṛnme priyaṁvadaḥ /
kausalyāṃ māṃ samaṃ paśyan sadā śuśrūṣate hi mām //
rāmādbhayaṃ kimāpannaṃ tava mūḍhe vadasva me /
tat.hśrutvā viṣasādātha kubjākāraṇavairiṇī //
śṛṇu madvacanaṃ devi yathārthaṃ te mahadbhayam/
tvāṃ toṣayan sadā rājā priyavākyāni bhāṣate //

Sri Ram is more dear to me, is my well-wisher and more soft-spoken as compared to Bharat. He treats me and Kaushalya equally, and always serves (i.e. is obedient and faithful to) me (56). Oh you wretched fool! Tell me what fear have you got from Sri Ram?' Hearing this, the haunch-back Manthra—who had the nature of creating ill-will and animosity without any rhyme or reason (i.e. without any provocation), began lamenting (57), and said to instigate her, 'Listen to me. In actual fact, a grave danger has indeed emerged for you. The king has been always using pampering sweet words to keep you mollified and pleased, and has tried to dodge you by keeping you satisfied (58).

कामुकोऽतथ्यवादी च त्वां वाचा परितोषयन्। कार्यं करोति तस्या वै राममातुः सुपुष्कलम्।। 59।।
मनस्येतन्निधायैव प्रेषयामास ते सुतम्। भरतं मातुलकुले प्रेषयामास सानुजम्।। 60।।

kāmuko'tathyavādī ca tvāṃ vācā paritoṣayan /
kāryaṃ karoti tasyā vai rāmamātuḥ supuṣkalam //

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manasyetannidhāyaiva preṣayāmāsa te sutam /
bharataṃ mātulakule preṣayāmāsa sānujam //

He (Dashrath) is very lascivious and a liar; he only keeps you distracted (by his sweet talks) but does all that Sri Ram's mother (Kaushalya) wishes him to do (59). With this idea (of crowning Sri Ram), he has cleverly sent Bharat and Shatrughan to their uncle's place (at the behest of Kaushalya) (60).

सुमित्रायाः समीचीनं भविष्यति न संशयः। लक्ष्मणो राममन्वेति राज्यं सोऽनुभविष्यति।। 61 ।।
भरतो राघवस्याग्रे किङ्करो वा भविष्यति। विवास्यते वा नगरात्प्राणैर्वा ह्याप्यतेऽचिरात्।। 62 ।।

sumitrāyāḥ samīcīnaṃ bhaviṣyati na saṁśayaḥ /
lakṣmaṇo rāmamanveti rājyaṃ so'nubhaviṣyati //
bharato rāghavasyāgre kiṅkaro vā bhaviṣyati /
vivāsyate vā nagarātprāṇairvā hāpyate'cirāt //

In this episode, all will be well with Sumitra without any doubt about it, for Laxman follows Sri Ram. Hence, he shall enjoy the kingdom with him (61). But Bharat has to live either as a servant (or slave) of Sri Ram, or shall be exiled from the kingdom or might be assassinated (62).

त्वं तु दासीव कौसल्यां नित्यं परिचरिष्यसि। ततोऽपि मरणं श्रेयो यत्सपत्न्याः पराभवः।। 63 ।।
अतः शीघ्रं यतस्वाद्य भरतस्याभिषेचने। रामस्य वनवासार्थं वर्षाणि नव पञ्च च।। 64 ।।

tvaṃ tu dāsīva kausalyāṃ nityaṃ paricariṣyasi /
tato'pi maraṇaṃ śreyo yatsapatnyāḥ parābhavaḥ //
ataḥ śīghraṃ yatasvādya bharatasyābhiṣecane /
rāmasya vanavāsārthaṃ varṣāṇi nava pañca ca //

And you will be saddled with the ignominious fate of always having to serve Kaushalya like a maid-servant. It is better to die than to be subjected to such humiliation at the hands of one's rival (in this case, a co-wife) (63).

Therefore, you should immediately try for Bharat's coronation (i.e. anointment as prince regent) and fourteen years of exile for Sri Ram in the forest (64).

ततो रूढोऽभये पुत्रस्तव राज्ञि भविष्यति। उपायं ते प्रवक्ष्यामि पूर्वमेव सुनिश्चितम्।। 65 ।।
पुरा देवासुरे युद्धे राजा दशरथः स्वयम्। इन्द्रेण याचितो धन्वी सहायार्थं महारथः।। 66 ।।

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tato rūḍho'bhaye putrastava rājñi bhaviṣyati /
upāyaṃ te pravakṣyāmi pūrvameva suniścitam //
purā devāsure yuddhe rājā daśarathaḥ svayam /
indreṇa yācito dhanvī sahāyārthaṃ mahārathaḥ //

If this happens to materialise, your son Bharat shall mount the throne without any obstacle in his path. To achieve this, I shall tell you a trick that I've already thought of (planned) before hand (65). In ancient times, during the legendary Gods-Demons confrontation (the war resultant from the churning of the ocean and fight for the nectar or Amrit), Indra himself had approached king Dashrath—who is an expert archer and most brave and courageous in war—for help against the demons (66).

जगाम सेनया सार्धं त्वया सह शुभानने। युद्धं प्रकुर्वतस्तस्य राक्षसैः सह धन्विनः।। 67।।
तदाक्षकीलो न्यपतच्छिन्नस्तस्य न वेद सः। त्वं तु हस्तं समावेश्य कीलरन्ध्रेऽतिधैर्यतः।।68।।

jagāma senayā sārdhaṃ tvayā saha śubhānane /
yuddhaṃ prakurvatastasya rākṣasaiḥ saha dhanvinaḥ //
tadākṣakīlo nyapatacchinnastasya na veda saḥ /
tvaṃ tu hastaṃ samāveśya kīlarandhre'tidhairyataḥ //

Oh the beautiful faced one! At that time, he had gone there to help the Gods, and had taken you along with him. When the expert archer-king was engaged in fierce battle with the demons, a nail from the wheel of his chariot broke and fell off without him being aware of it. Then you had thrust your hands most courageously in the hole left by the nail (67-68).

स्थितवत्यसितापाङ्गि पतिप्राणपरीप्सया। ततो हत्वासुरान्सर्वान् ददर्श त्वामरिन्दमः।।69।।
आश्चर्यं परमं लेभे त्वामालिङ्ग्य मुदान्वितः। वृणीष्व यत्ते मनसि वाञ्छितं वरदोऽस्म्यहम्।।70।।

sthitavatyasitāpāṅgi patiprāṇaparīpsayā /
tato hatvāsurānsarvān dadarśa tvāmarindamaḥ //
āścaryaṃ paramaṃ lebhe tvāmāliṅgya mudānvitaḥ /
vṛṇīṣva yatte manasi vāñchitaṃ varado'smyaham //

And, oh the dark-eyed one! You had remained in that position for a long time to save the life of your husband (because had the wheel dismantled from the axle, the chariot would have toppled on its side, killing the king). When all the demons had been killed, the vanquisher of enemies that Dashrath is then saw you (in that position, with your

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hands thrust in the wheel) (69). He was overcome with astounding astonishment and jubilantly embraced you, saying, 'I want to give you a boon. Ask whatever you desire (70).

वरद्वयं वृणीष्व त्वमेवं राजावदत्स्वयम्। त्वयोक्तो वरदो राजन्यदि दत्तं वरद्वयम्।। 71।।
त्वय्येव तिष्ठतु चिरं न्यासभूतं ममानघ। यदा मेऽवसरो भूयात्तदा देहि वरद्वयम्।। 72।।

varadvayaṃ vṛṇīṣva tvamevaṃ rājāvadatsvayam /
tvayokto varado rājanyadi dattaṃ varadvayam //
tvayyeva tiṣṭhatu ciraṃ nyāsabhūtaṃ mamānagha /
yadā me'vasaro bhūyāttadā dehi varadvayam //

You can ask for two boons (or promises) now.' At this, you had replied, 'Oh Anagh (sinless, pure, majestic) king! If you indeed wish to grant me two boons (71), then you should keep it pending as a credit on my behalf; when the time comes, you should redeem them to me' (72).

तथेत्युक्त्वा स्वयं राजा मन्दिरं व्रज सुव्रते। त्वत्तः श्रुतं मया पूर्वमिदानीं स्मृतिमागतम्।। 73।।
अतः शीघ्रं प्रविश्याद्य क्रोधागारं रुषान्विता। विमुच्य सर्वाभरणं सर्वतो विनिकीर्य च।
भूमावेव शयाना त्वं तूष्णीमातिष्ठ भामिनि।। 74।।
यावत्सत्यं प्रतिज्ञाय राजाभीष्टं करोति ते। श्रुत्वा त्रिवक्रयोक्तं तत्तदा केकयनन्दिनी।। 75।।
तथ्यमेवाखिलं मेने दुःसङ्गाहितविभ्रमा। तामाह कैकेयी दुष्टा कुतस्ते बुद्धिरीदृशी।। 76।।

tathetyuktvā svayaṃ rājā mandiraṃ vraja suvrate /
tvattaḥ śrutaṃ mayā pūrvamidānīṃ smṛtimāgatam //
ataḥ śīghraṃ praviśyādya krodhāgāraṃ ruṣānvitā /
vimucya sarvābharaṇaṃ sarvato vinikīrya ca /
bhūmāveva śayānā tvaṃ tūṣṇīmātiṣṭha bhāmini //
yāvatsatyaṃ pratijñāya rājābhīṣṭaṃ karoti te /
śrutvā trivakrayoktaṃ tattadā kekayanandinī //
tathyamevākhilaṃ mene duḥsaṅgāhitavibhramā /
tāmāha kaikeyī duṣṭā kutaste buddhirīdṛśī //

Acceding to your request by saying 'alright', the king said—'Oh the one who is steadfast in your vows (i.e. duties, responsibilities)! (As a loyal wife, you had lived up to your marriage vows by putting your life in danger to save me.) Now let's go home'. Oh queen, I have heard about this episode from you yourself; I just happen to remember it now (73). So, you should hastily go to the 'Kop Bhavan' (literally, a

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palace earmarked for the queens to show their anger) wrathfully, remove all your ornaments and scatter them everywhere, and till the time the king does not make a stern vow to fulfill your desires, you should remain spread-eagled on the floor' (74-75). Hearing the words of the haunch-back Manthara, who was deformed (bent, twisted) at three places, the wicked Kaikeyi—whose intellect, wisdom and discrimination was corrupted by the maligning effect of bad company—regarded Manthara's advise as correct and beneficial for her welfare. She said to her, 'From where have you got such wisdom? (76)

एवं त्वां बुद्धिसम्पन्नां न जाने वक्रसुन्दरि। भरतो यदि राजा मे भविष्यति सुतः प्रियः।।77।।
ग्रामान् शतं प्रदास्यामि मम त्वं प्राणवल्लभा। इत्युक्त्वा कोपभवनं प्रविश्य सहसा रुषा।।78।।

evaṃ tvāṃ buddhisampannāṃ na jāne vakrasundari /
bharato yadi me bhaviṣyati sutaḥ priyaḥ //
grāmān śataṃ pradāsyāmi mama tvaṃ prāṇavallabhā /
ityuktvā kopabhavanaṃ praviśya sahasā ruṣā //

Oh deformed beauty! I did not know that you are so intelligent, prudent and wise. If my son Bharat becomes a king, I shall reward you with a hundred villages. You are dearer to me like my own life'. Saying this, Kaikeyi went to the Kop Bhavan, seething with anger and vengeance (77-78).

विमुच्य सर्वाभरणं परिकीर्य समन्ततः। भूमौ शयाना मलिना मलिनाम्बरधारिणी।।79।।
प्रोवाच शृणु मे कुब्जे यावद्रामो वनं व्रजेत्। प्राणांस्त्यक्ष्येऽथ वा वक्रे शयिष्ये तावदेव हि।।80।।
निश्चयं कुरु कल्याणि कल्याणं ते भविष्यति। इत्युक्त्वा प्रययौ कुब्जा गृहं सापि तथाकरोत्।।81।।

vimucya sarvābharaṇaṃ parikīrya samantataḥ /
bhūmau śayānā malinā malināmbaradhāriṇī //
provāca śṛṇu me kubje yāvadrāmo vanaṃ vrajet /
prāṇāṁstyakṣye'tha vā vakre śayiṣye tāvadeva hi //
niścayaṃ kuru kalyāṇi kalyāṇaṃ te bhaviṣyasi /
ityuktvā prayayau kubjā gṛhaṃ sāpi tathākarot //

She removed all her ornaments and scattered them around her, wore dirty and torn clothes, fell to the ground, and said, 'Oh haunch-back (Manthara), listen! Till the time Sri Ram does not go to the forest, I shall remain in this position, even if I have to die' (79-80). Advising her to do as was planned by saying 'You should do it without doubt

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and dithering (i.e. carry out the plan without yielding to any pressures or allurements)—this will surely result in your welfare', that haunchback (Manthara) went home, and Kaikeyi began implementing the plan (81).

धीरोऽत्यन्तदयान्वितोऽपि सगुणाचारान्वितो वाथवा
नीतिज्ञो विधिवाददेशिकपरो विद्याविवेकोऽथवा।
दुष्टानामतिपापभावितधियां सङ्गं सदा चेद्भजेत्तद्बुद्ध्या
परिभावितो व्रजति तत् साम्यं क्रमेण स्फुटम्।।82।।

अतः सङ्गः परित्याज्यो दुष्टानां सर्वदैव हि। दुःसङ्गी च्यवते स्वार्थाद्यथेयं राजकन्यका।।83।।

dhīro'tyantadayānvito'pi saguṇācārānvito vāthavā
nītijño vidhivādadeśikaparo vidyāviveko'thavā /
duṣṭānāmatipāpabhāvitadhiyāṃ saṅgaṃ sadā cedbhajettadbuddhyā
paribhāvito vrajati tat sāmyaṃ krameṇa sphuṭam //
ataḥ saṅgaḥ parityājyo duṣṭānāṃ sarvadaiva hi /
duḥsaṅgī cyavate svārthādyatheyaṃ rājakanyakā //

Verily, no matter how courageous, fortitudinous, kind, merciful, compassionate, virtuous, righteous, noble, abider of law, diligent and steadfast towards his duties and responsibilities, devoted towards his Guru, and full of wisdom, knowledge and intelligent a person is, if he has (or keeps) contact with scheming, wicked, evil, pervert and crooked persons, then surely, sooner or later, he would be influenced by their sinful and pervert intellect, and gradually become one like them (82). This is why one should forsake the company of evil and wicked persons at all costs, because by such company a person falls from his noble and exalted ideals and stature like this princess (Kaikeyi) (83).

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Ayodhya Kand — Canto 3

King Dashrath accedes to Kaikeyi's demands

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

ततो दशरथो राजा रामाभ्युदयकारणात्। आदिश्य मन्त्रिप्रकृतीः सानन्दो गृहमाविशत्।।1।।
तत्रादृष्ट्वा प्रियां राजा किमेतदति विह्वलः। या पुरा मन्दिरं तस्याः प्रविष्टे मयि शोभना।।2।।

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हसन्ती मामुपायाति सा किं नैवाद्य दृश्यते। इत्यात्मन्येव संचिन्त्य मनसातिविदूयता।।3।।
पप्रच्छ दासीनिकरं कुतो वः स्वामिनी शुभा। नायाति मां यथापूर्वं मत्प्रिया प्रियदर्शना।।4।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tato daśaratho rājā rāmābhyudayakāraṇāt /
ādiśya mantriprakṛtīḥ sānando gṛhamāviśat //
tatrādṛṣṭvā priyāṃ rājā kimetadati vihvalaḥ /
yā purā mandiraṃ tasyāḥ praviṣṭe mayi śobhanā //
hasantī māmupāyāti sā kiṃ naivādya dṛśyate /
ityātmanyeva saṁcintya manasātividūyatā //
papraccha dāsīnikaraṃ kuto vaḥ svāminī śubhā /
nāyāti māṃ yathāpūrvaṃ matpriyā priyadarśanā //

Lord Shiva said to Parvati—'After that, king Dashrath, having ordered the ministers and the citizens to do all auspicious deeds for the crowning (literally, ascent) of Sri Ram on the throne of the kingdom, proceeded to his private palace most cheerfully (1). Finding his dearest wife Kaikeyi absent from there, he became agitated and alarmed, and began to wonder, 'What is the reason that she—who used to smilingly welcome me as soon as I came here—is not seen anywhere today?' Being greatly bewildered and anguished in his heart at this (2-3), he asked the attendant maids, 'Where is your good charactered mistress today? Why has that beautiful-to-look-at beloved mistress of yours not come before me as she always used to do?' (4).

ता ऊचुः क्रोधभवनं प्रविष्टा नैव विद्महे। कारणं तत्र देव त्वं गत्वा निश्चेतुमर्हसि।।5।।
इत्युक्तो भयसन्त्रस्तो राजा तस्याः समीपगः। उपविश्य शनैर्देहं स्पृशन्वै पाणिनाब्रवीत्।।6।।
किं शेषे वसुधापृष्ठे पर्यङ्कादीन् विहाय च। मां त्वं खेदयसे भीरु यतो मां नावभाषसे।।7।।

tā ūcuḥ krodhabhavanaṃ praviṣṭā naiva vidmahe /
kāraṇaṃ tatra deva tvaṃ gatvā niścetumarhasi //
ityukto bhayasantrasto rājā tasyāḥ samīpagaḥ /
upaviśya śanairdehaṃ spṛśanvai pāṇinābravīt //
kiṃ śeṣe vasudhāpṛṣṭhe paryaṅkādīn vihāya ca /
māṃ tvaṃ khedayase bhīru yato māṃ nāvabhāṣase //

The maids/attendants replied, 'Oh Lord! The reason is not known, but today she has gone to the 'Kop Bhavan'. You can go there yourself and find out everything' (5). Hearing this answer from the maids/royal attendants, the king got scared and alarmed, and he went to her

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(Kaikeyi). He sat down besides her, caressed her slowly (fondly) trying to appease her and said (6), 'Oh you shy and timid one! Why have you left your bedstead and are lying on the floor? You do not speak to me; this causes sorrow, gloom and grief in me (7).

अलङ्कारं परित्यज्य भूमौ मलिनवाससा। किमर्थं ब्रूहि सकलं विधास्ये तव वाञ्छितम्।। 8।।
को वा तवाहितं कर्ता नारी वा पुरुषोऽपि वा। स मे दण्ड्यश्च वध्यश्च भविष्यति न संशयः।।9।।

alaṅkāraṃ parityajya bhūmau malinavāsasā /
kimarthaṃ brūhi sakalaṃ vidhāsye tava vāñchitam //
ko vā tavāhitaṃ kartā nārī vā puruṣo'pi vā /
sa me daṇḍyaśca vadhyaśca bhaviṣyati na saṁśayaḥ //

Why have you thrown away all your ornaments and are lying on the floor in unkempt and shabby clothes? Tell me what you wish; I shall fulfill it (8). Who has harmed you? Whether he is a man or a woman, he or she will be surely punished by me. Not only this, he can also be killed if you so desire (9).

ब्रूहि देवि यथा प्रीतिस्तदवश्यं ममाग्रतः। तदिदानीं साधयिष्ये सुदुर्लभमपि क्षणात्।। 10।।
जानासि त्वं मम स्वान्तं प्रियं मां स्ववशे स्थितम्। तथापि मां खेदयसे वृथा तव परिश्रमः।।11।।
ब्रूहि कं धनिनं कुर्या दरिद्रं ते प्रियङ्करम्। धनिनं क्षणमात्रेण निर्धनं च तवाहितम्।।12।।

brūhi devi yathā prītistadavaśyaṃ mamāgrataḥ /
tadidānīṃ sādhayiṣye sudurlabhamapi kṣaṇāt //
jānāsi tvaṃ mama svāntaṃ priyaṃ māṃ svavaśe sthitam /
tathāpi māṃ khedayase vṛthā tava pariśramaḥ //
brūhi kaṃ dhaninaṃ kuryāṃ daridraṃ te priyaṅkaram /
dhaninaṃ kṣaṇamātreṇa nirdhanaṃ ca tavāhitam //

Oh Devi (literally meaning a Goddess or an exalted and praise worthy woman)! Whatever will make you happy, do tell me. Even though that work might be most difficult, I shall do it immediately now, without wasting a moment (10). You know my heart—I love you most dearly, and am under your command. Inspite of that, you make me feel aggrieved, so sorrowful and regretful? You are trying in vain! (11). Tell me, which pauper do you wish to be made rich and which rich person has annoyed you that you wish him to be made a pauper—I shall do it instantly (12).

ब्रूहि कं वा वधिष्यामि वधार्हो वा विमोक्ष्यते। किमत्र बहुनोक्तेन प्राणान्दास्यामि ते प्रिये।। 13।।

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मम प्राणात्प्रियतरो रामो राजीवलोचनः। तस्योपरि शपे ब्रूहि त्वद्धितं तत्करोम्यहम्॥14॥

brūhi kaṃ vā vadhiṣyāmi vadhārho vā vimokṣyase /
kimatra bahunoktena prāṇāndāsyāmi te priye //
mama prāṇātpriyataro rāmo rājīvalocanaḥ /
tasyopari śape brūhi tvaddhitaṃ tatkaromyaham //

Tell me, which person—who should not be normally killed—do you wish to be slayed, or which person destined to be slayed, be set free? Oh dear! What more can I say on this subject—I can give my life for, and to, you (13). The lotus-eyed Sri Ram is dearer to me than my life. I make a vow in his name that I shall do whatever will please you' (14).

इति ब्रुवाणं राजानं शपन्तं राघवोपरि। शनैर्विमृजय नेत्रे सा राजानं प्रत्यभाषत॥15॥
यदि सत्यप्रतिज्ञोऽसि शपथं कुरुषे यदि। याच्ञ्छां मे सफलां कर्तुं शीघ्रमेव त्वमर्हसि॥16॥

iti bruvāṇaṃ rājānaṃ śapantaṃ rāghavopari /
śanairvimṛjya netre sā rājānaṃ pratyabhāṣata //
yadi satyapratijño'si śapathaṃ kuruṣe yadi /
yācñchāṃ me saphalāṃ kartuṃ śīghrameva tvamarhasi //

When the king had made an oath in the name of Sri Ram, Kaikeyi slowly dried (wiped) her tears and said to him (15), 'If you are really steadfast and unwavering in your words of honour and truthful to your vows, and say this on oath, then you should fulfill all that I ask you now (16).

पूर्वं देवासुरे युद्धे मया त्वं परिरक्षितः। तदा वरद्वयं दत्तं त्वया मे तुष्टचेतसा॥17॥
तद्द्वयं न्यासभूतं मे स्थापितं त्वयि सुव्रत। तत्रैकेन वरेणाशु भरतं मे प्रियं सुतम्॥18॥
एभिः संभृतसंभारैर्यौवराज्येऽभिषेचय। अपरेण वरेणाशु रामो गच्छतु दण्डकान्॥19॥

pūrvaṃ devāsure yuddhe mayā tvaṃ parirakṣitaḥ /
tadā varadvayaṃ dattaṃ tvayā me tuṣṭacetasā //
taddvayaṃ nyāsabhūtaṃ me sthāpitaṃ tvayi suvrata /
tatraikena vareṇāśu bharataṃ me priyaṃ sutam //
ebhiḥ saṃbhṛtasaṃbhārairyauvarājye'bhiṣecaya /
apareṇa vareṇāśu rāmo gacchatu daṇḍakān //

In an earlier time, during the God-Demon war, I had saved your life. At that time you were so pleased and happy with me that you had promised to grant me two boons (17). So, oh the truthful one, I

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had kept those two boons pending with you as credit. Now, out of those two, first you must immediately anoint Bharat as prince-regent using the same paraphernalia collected for the purpose of anointment ceremony (of Sri Ram), and second, Sri Ram should proceed to the Dandak forest forthwith (18-19).

मुनिवेषधरः श्रीमान् जटावल्कलभूषणः। चतुर्दश समास्तत्र कन्दमूलफलाशनः॥ 20॥
पुनरायातु तस्यान्ते वने वा तिष्ठतु स्वयम्। प्रभाते गच्छतु वनं रामो राजीवलोचनः॥ 21॥
यदि किञ्चिद्विलम्बेत प्राणांस्त्यक्ष्ये तवाग्रतः। भव सत्यप्रतिज्ञस्त्वमेतदेव मम प्रियम्॥ 22॥

muniveṣadharaḥ śrīmān jaṭāvalkalabhūṣaṇaḥ /
caturdaśa samāstatra kandamūlaphalāśanaḥ //
punarāyātu tasyānte vane vā tiṣṭhatu svayam /
prabhāte gacchatu vanaṃ rāmo rājīvalocanaḥ //
yadi kiñcidvilambeta prāṇāṁstyakṣye tavāgrataḥ /
bhava satyapratijñastvametadeva mama priyam //

There, the gentleman Ram (Kaikeyi uses this word 'gentleman', or 'Srimaan', as a sarcastic remark) should wear matted hairs and clothes made from bark of trees (the birch tree), subsist on food consisting of edible roots, stems and fruits, and live like a hermit for the next fourteen years (20). After that period, if he wishes, he can come back to Ayodhya, or stay back in the forest. But the lotus-eyed Sri Ram should surely go to the forest tomorrow morning without fail (21). If there is any delay on this count, then I shall die (i.e. commit suicide) in front of you. You should live up to your reputations and vows, and be truthful. This is my only wish and requirement' (22).

श्रुत्वैतद्दारुणं वाक्यं कैकेय्या रोमहर्षणम्। निपपात महीपालो वज्राहत इवाचलः॥ 23॥
शनैरुन्मील्य नयने विमृज्य परया भिया। दुःस्वप्नो वा मया दृष्टो ह्यथवा चित्तविभ्रमः॥ 24॥

śrutvaitaddāruṇaṃ vākyaṃ kaikeyyā romaharṣaṇam /
nipapāta mahīpālo vajrāhata ivācalaḥ //
śanairunmīlya nayane vimṛjya parayā bhiyā /
duḥsvapno vā mayā dṛṣṭo hyathavā cittavibhramaḥ //

Hearing such stunningly shocking, stern and heartless words of Kaikeyi, Dashrath collapsed (crumbled) like a mountain hit (struck) by thunderbolt (23). Gradually he recovered himself, opened his eyes slowly, dried (wiped) his tears remorsefully, and wondered—'Is this a nightmare, or am I hallucinating?' (24).

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इत्यालोक्य पुरः पत्नीं व्याघ्रीमिव पुरः स्थिताम्। किमिदं भाषसे भद्रे मम प्राणहरं वचः।। 25।।
रामः कमपराधं ते कृतवान्कमलेक्षणः। ममाग्रे राघवगुणान्वर्णयस्यनिशं शुभान्।। 26।।
कौसल्यां मां समं पश्यन् शुश्रूषां कुरुते सदा। इति ब्रुवन्ती त्वं पूर्वमिदानीं भाषसेऽन्यथा।। 27।।
राज्यं गृहाण पुत्राय रामस्तिष्ठतु मन्दिरे। अनुगृह्णीष्व मां वामे रामान्नास्ति भयं तव।। 28।।

ityālokya puraḥ patnīṃ vyāghrīmiva puraḥ sthitām /
kimidaṃ bhāṣase bhadre mama prāṇaharaṃ vacaḥ //
rāmaḥ kamaparādhaṃ te kṛtavānkamalekṣaṇaḥ /
mamāgre rāghavaguṇānvarṇayasyaniśaṃ śubhān //
kausalyāṃ māṃ samaṃ paśyan śuśrūṣāṃ kurute sadā /
iti bruvantī tvaṃ pūrvamidānīṃ bhāṣase'nyathā //
rājyaṃ gṛhāṇa putrāya rāmastiṣṭhatu mandire /
anugṛhṇīṣva māṃ vāme rāmānnāsti bhayaṃ tava //

At that instant, seeing Kaikeyi sitting in front of him like an unrepentant lioness, he said, 'Oh lady! What are these words that you speak which are capable of stealing my life (i.e. potent enough to kill me)? (25). What harm (or offence) has the lotus-eyed Sri Ram done to you? You had always been praising Sri Ram's good character and nature before me day and night (26). You had earlier been saying that 'Ram treats me and Kaushalya alike, and always serves me'. Why then are you talking the opposite now? (27). You take the kingdom for your son (Bharat), but let Sri Ram stay here. Oh 'Vamme' (one who sits on the left—that is, a wife; the word also refers to a person who is in opposition)! Have mercy on me; you have nothing to fear from Sri Ram' (28).

इत्युक्त्वाश्रुपरीताक्षः पादयोर्निपपात ह। कैकेयी प्रत्युवाचेदं सापि रक्तान्तलोचना।। 29।।
राजेन्द्र किं त्वं भ्रान्तोऽसि उक्तं तद्भाषसेऽन्यथा। मिथ्या करोषि चेत्स्वीयं भाषितं नरको भवेत्।। 30।।

ityuktvāśruparītākṣaḥ pādayornipapāta ha /
kaikeyī pratyuvācedaṃ sāpi raktāntalocanā //
rājendra kiṃ tvaṃ bhrānto'si uktaṃ tadbhāṣase'nyathā /
mithyā karoṣi cetsvīyaṃ bhāṣitaṃ narako bhavet //

Saying this (or lamenting thus), Dashrath fell at her feet, full of tears and pleading before her (like a supplicant). Then the unrelenting Kaikeyi glared at him sternly with red angry eyes (29), 'Oh king! Are you having delusions (or hallucinations) that you speak against your

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own vows (i.e. are speaking a lie). Remember, if you break your vows, you will have to suffer in hell (as well as the ignominy of being a liar) (30).

वनं न गच्छेद्यदि रामचन्द्रः प्रभातकालेऽजिनचीरयुक्तः।
उद्बन्धनं वा विषभक्षणं वा कृत्वा मरिष्ये पुरतस्तवाहम्।। 31।।
सत्यप्रतिज्ञोऽहमितीह लोके विडम्बसे सर्वसभान्तरेषु।
रामोपरि त्वं शपथं च कृत्वा मिथ्याप्रतिज्ञो नरकं प्रयाहि।।32।।

vanaṃ na gacchedyadi rāmacandraḥ prabhātakāle'jinacīrayuktaḥ /
udbandhanaṃ vā viṣabhakṣaṇaṃ vā kṛtvā mariṣye puratastavāham //
satyapratijño'hamitīha loke viḍambase sarvasabhāntareṣu /
rāmopari tvaṃ śapathaṃ ca kṛtvā mithyāpratijño narakaṃ prayāhi //

If Sri Ram does not proceed to the forest tomorrow morning itself attired in a deer skin and wearing apparels made of bark of trees, I shall either hang myself or eat poison and kill myself in front of you (31). You seem to deceive everyone in all the assemblies in the world by saying 'I am truthful to my words', but now you break a vow made on oath invoking Sri Ram—hence, you will have to go to hell (besides the horrible scandal it would create for you)' (32).

इत्युक्तः प्रियया दीनो मग्नो दुःखार्णवे नृपः। मूर्च्छितः पतितो भूमौ विसंज्ञो मृतको यथा।। 33।।
एवं रात्रिर्गता तस्य दुःखात्संवत्सरोपमा। अरुणोदयकाले तु बन्दिनो गायका जगुः।। 34।।

ityuktaḥ priyayā dīno magno duḥkhārṇave nṛpaḥ /
mūrcchitaḥ patito bhūmau visaṁjño mṛtako yathā //
evaṃ rātrirgatā tasya duḥkhātsaṁvatsaropamā /
aruṇodayakāle tu bandino gāyakā jaguḥ //

Hearing such stern, merciful and harsh words of his beloved, the king was submerged in an ocean of sorrows, grief and miseries, and become so extremely agitated that he became unconscious, fainted and fell on the ground as if struck by death itself (33). In this way, that night seemed like a year for him because of extreme grief, anguish, sorrows, regrets and gloom. Here meanwhile, at the crack of dawn the next day, singers and royal bards and minstrels began singing laudatory songs outside the gates of the palace (34).

निवारयित्वा तान् सर्वान्कैकेयी रोषमास्थिता। ततः प्रभातसमये मध्यकक्षमुपस्थिताः।। 35।।
ब्राह्मणाः क्षत्रिया वैश्या ऋषयः कन्यकास्तथा। छत्रं च चामरं दिव्यं गजो वाजी तथैव च।।36।।

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nivārayitvā tān sarvānkaikeyī roṣamāsthitā /
tataḥ prabhātasamaye madhyakakṣamupasthitāḥ //
brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyā ṛṣayaḥ kanyakāstathā /
chatraṃ ca cāmaraṃ divyaṃ gajo vājī tathaiva ca //

But Kaikeyi had ordered them to stop the celebrations, and she was sitting angrily and vengefully. Meanwhile, all the necessary arrangements and accoutrements for the anointment ceremony, such as the assembly of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, sages and seers as well as virgin girls (who were worshipped as symbolic Goddesses), majestic and grand ceremonial umbrellas, whisks, elephants, horses etc., were all assembled and readied at the central gate (35-36).

अन्याश्च वारमुख्या याः पौरजानपदास्तथा। वसिष्ठेन यथाज्ञप्तं तत्सर्वं तत्र संस्थितम्।। 7।।
स्त्रियो बालाश्च वृद्धाश्च रात्रौ निद्रां न लेभिरे। कदा द्रक्ष्यामहे रामं पीतकौशेयवाससम्।।38।।

anyāśca vāramukhyā yāḥ paurajānapadāstathā /
vasiṣṭhena yathājñaptaṃ tatsarvaṃ tatra saṁsthitam //
striyo bālāśca vṛddhāśca rātrau nidrāṃ na lebhire /
kadā drakṣyāmahe rāmaṃ pītakauśeyavāsasam //

Besides this, as per instructions of sage Vashistha, chief courtesans and denizens of the city as well as subjects of the kingdom (from the districts) were also present there (37). During the previous night, none—the women, the children or the elderly—slept. Everyone was excited and jubilant at the prospect of watching Lord Ram dressed in a silk Pitambar (a body wrapping yellow silk garment) during the next day's ceremonies (38).

सर्वाभरणसम्पन्नं किरीटकटकोज्ज्वलम्। कौस्तुभाभरणं श्यामं कन्दर्पशतसुन्दरम्।। 39।।
अभिषिक्तं समायातं गजारूढं स्मिताननम्। श्वेतच्छत्रधरं तत्र लक्ष्मणं लक्षणान्वितम्।। 40।।
रामं कदा वा द्रक्ष्यामः प्रभातं वा कदा भवेत्। इत्युत्सुकधियः सर्वे बभूवुः पुरवासिनः।।41।।

sarvābharaṇasampannaṃ kirīṭakaṭakojjvalam /
kaustubhābharaṇaṃ śyāmaṃ kandarpaśatasundaram //
abhiṣiktaṃ samāyātaṃ gajārūḍhaṃ smitānanam /
śvetacchatradharaṃ tatra lakṣmaṇaṃ lakṣaṇānvitam //
rāmaṃ kadā vā drakṣyāmaḥ prabhātaṃ vā kadā bhavet /
ityutsukadhiyaḥ sarve babhūvuḥ puravāsinaḥ //

(All the citizens had been eagerly waiting for Lord's anointment; they had been wondering throughout the night—) 'He, who shall be

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decorated by all the available ornaments and be adorned by a brilliant tiara and crown as well as a Kaustav Mani (a jewel worn by Lord Vishnu on his chest), who has a beautiful dark radiant complexion which is akin to hundreds of Kamdeo-cupids taken together, and who shall have the white ceremonial umbrella held over his head by Laxman who is endowed with all the good characters and virtues—when shall we behold him (Sri Ram) atop an elephant, smiling sweetly, come majestically for the anointment ceremony? When will that auspicious dawn occur?' In this manner, the mind, heart and intellect of all the subjects of the kingdom were extremely eager and excited (39-41).

नेदानीमुत्थितो राजा किमर्थं चेति चिन्तयन्। सुमन्त्रः शनकैः प्रायाद्यत्र राजावतिष्ठते।। 42।।
वर्धयन् जयशब्देन प्रणमञ्छिरसा नृपम्। अतिखिन्नं नृपं दृष्ट्वा कैकेयीं समपृच्छत।। 43।।

nedānīmutthito rājā kimarthaṃ ceti cintayan /
sumantraḥ śanakaiḥ prāyādyatra rājāvatiṣṭhate //
vardhayan jayaśabdena praṇamañchirasā nṛpam /
atikhinnaṃ nṛpaṃ dṛṣṭvā kaikeyīṃ samapṛcchata //

About this time, the senior minister Sumantra wondered why the king had not got up from his sleep, and he went silently to the palace to enquire (42). Having reached there, he saluted the king saying 'Glory to you', and bowed before him. Seeing the king most remorseful and worried, he asked Kaikeyi (43)—

देवि कैकेयि वर्धस्व किं राजा दृश्यतेऽन्यथा। तमाह कैकेयी राजा रात्रौ निद्रां न लब्धवान्।। 44।।
राम रामेति रामेति राममेवानुचिन्तयन्। प्रजागरेण वै राजा ह्यस्वस्थ इव लक्ष्यते।
राममानय शीघ्रं त्वं राजा द्रष्टुमिहेच्छति।। 45।।

devi kaikeyi vardhasva kiṃ rājā dṛśyate'nyathā /
tamāha kaikeyī rājā rātrau nidrāṃ na labdhavān //
rāma rāmeti rāmeti rāmamevānucintayan /
prajāgareṇa vai rājā hyasvastha iva lakṣyate /
rāmamānaya śīghraṃ tvaṃ rājā draṣṭumihecchati //

'Oh Devi Kaikeyi! Bless you! Say, why is the king looking so disturbed, remorseful and perturbed?' At this, Kaikeyi replied, 'Today, the king did not get any sleep last night (44). The whole night he kept on repeating 'Ram, Ram' as if in a delirious trance. Since he kept awake,

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he looks little sick and ill at ease today. The king wishes to see Sri Ram. Hence, you go and bring him here immediately' (45).

अश्रुत्वा राजवचनं कथं गच्छामि भामिनि। तच्छ्रुत्वा मन्त्रिणो वाक्यं राजा मन्त्रिणमब्रवीत्॥46॥
सुमन्त्र रामं द्रक्ष्यामि शीघ्रमानय सुन्दरम्। इत्युक्तस्त्वरितं गत्वा सुमन्त्रो राममन्दिरम्॥47॥

aśrutvā rājavacanaṃ kathaṃ gacchāmi bhāmini /
tacchrutvā mantriṇo vākyaṃ rājā mantriṇamabravīt //
sumantra rāmaṃ drakṣyāmi śīghramānaya sundaram /
ityuktastvaritaṃ gatvā sumantro rāmamandiram //

'Oh noble lady! How can I go without the king's permission?' Hearing these words of the minister, the king said (46), 'Oh Sumantra! I want to see Sri Ram, who is an image of beauty and charm. Bring him here soon'. As soon as the king said so, Sumantra proceeded to the palace of Sri Ram (47).

अवारितः प्रविष्टोऽयं त्वरितं राममब्रवीत्। शीघ्रमागच्छ भद्रं ते राम राजीवलोचन॥48॥
पितुर्गेहं मया सार्धं राजा त्वां द्रष्टुमिच्छति। इत्युक्तो रथमारुह्य सम्भ्रमात्त्वरितो ययौ॥49॥

avāritaḥ praviṣṭo'yaṃ tvaritaṃ rāmamabravīt /
śīghramāgaccha bhadraṃ te rāma rājīvalocana //
piturgehaṃ mayā sārdhaṃ rājā tvāṃ draṣṭumicchati /
ityukto rathamāruhya sambhramāttvarito yayau //

He entered the palace without any objection (from the guards) and said to him, 'Oh the lotus-eyed Sri Ram! Bless you with all welfares and auspiciousness. Accompany me soon to your father's place for the king wishes to meet (see) you'. Hearing this, Sri Ram appeared astonished, and he immediately mounted a chariot and headed for his father's palace (48-49).

रामः सारथिना सार्धं लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः। मध्यकक्षे वसिष्ठादीन् पश्यन्नेव त्वरान्वितः॥50॥
पितुः समीपं सङ्गम्य ननाम चरणौ पितुः। राममालिङ्गितुं राजा समुत्थाय ससम्भ्रमः॥51॥
बाहू प्रसार्य रामेति दुःखान्मध्ये पपात ह। हाहेति रामस्तं शीघ्रमालिङ्ग्याङ्के न्यवेशयत्॥52॥

rāmaḥ sārathinā sārdhaṃ lakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ /
madhyakakṣe vasiṣṭhādīn paśyanneva tvarānvitaḥ //
pituḥ samīpaṃ saṅgamya nanāma caraṇau pituḥ /
rāmamāliliṅgitu rājā samutthāya sasambhramaḥ //
bāhū prasārya rāmeti duḥkhānmadhye papāta ha /
hāheti rāmastaṃ śīghramāliṅgyāṅke nyaveśayat //

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Accompanied by the charioteer and Laxman, Sri Ram showed his regards to sage Vashistha and others assembled at the central gate by merely bowing before them from a distance while still on the move, and hastily reached his father and bowed before his feet. At that moment, as soon as the king stood up and extended his arms eagerly to embrace Sri Ram, he stopped short in the middle, muttered 'Ah Ram' and slumped down on to the ground. Then Sri Ram lamented aloud in confusion and perplexity, saying 'Alas! Alas!!' He hurriedly embraced his father and picked him up onto his lap (50-52).

राजानं मूर्च्छितं दृष्ट्वा चुक्रुशुः सर्वयोषितः। किमर्थं रोदनमिति वाशिष्ठोऽपि समाविशत्।। 53 ।।
रामः पप्रच्छ किमिदं राज्ञो दुःखस्य कारणम्। एवं पृच्छति रामे सा कैकेयी राममब्रवीत्।।54 ।।
त्वमेव कारणं ह्यत्र राज्ञो दुःखोपशान्तये। किञ्चित्कार्यं त्वया राम कर्तव्यं नृपतेर्हितम्।।55 ।।

rājānaṃ mūrcchitaṃ dṛṣṭvā cukruśuḥ sarvayoṣitaḥ /
kimarthaṃ rodanamiti vasiṣṭho'pi samāviśat //
rāmaḥ papraccha kimidaṃ rājño duḥkhasya kāraṇam /
evaṃ pṛcchati rāme sā kaikeyī rāmamabravīt //
tvameva kāraṇaṃ hyatra rājño duḥkhopaśāntaye /
kiñcitkāryaṃ tvayā rāma kartavyaṃ nṛpaterhitam //

Seeing the king in an unconscious state, all the women folk of the royal household began weeping and wailing. Wondering what was the cause of these loud wailings, sage Vashistha also reached there from the central gate (53). Sri Ram asked Kaikeyi, 'What is the reason for the king's great miseries and sorrows?' When thus asked, Kaikeyi replied (54), 'Oh Sri Ram! You are the cause of the king's agonies, and you will have to do something which pleases him in order to calm down his mental turmoil, dilemma and contrition which are causing him so much distress, anguish and grief (55).

कुरु सत्यप्रतिज्ञस्त्वं राजानं सत्यवादिनम्। राज्ञा वरद्वयं दत्तं मम सन्तुष्टचेतसा।। 56 ।।
त्वदधीनं तु तत्सर्वं वक्तुं त्वां लज्जते नृपः। सत्यपाशेन सम्बद्धं पितरं त्रातुमर्हसि।।57 ।।

kuru satyapratijñastvaṃ rājānaṃ satyavādinam /
rājñā varadvayaṃ dattaṃ mama santuṣṭacetasā //
tvadadhīnaṃ tu tatsarvaṃ vaktuṃ tvāṃ lajjate nṛpaḥ /
satyapāśena sambaddhaṃ pitaraṃ trātumarhasi //

You are steadfast and expeditious in upholding truth yourself, and you should also make (i.e. help) the king stick to his vows. He has

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been pleased to grant me two boons earlier (56). But the successful implementation of those two boons are in your control (i.e. in your hands; it is only you who can help him to successfully fulfill his vows). The king appears to hesitate (is reluctant) to tell them to you himself, but you should protect (free) your father, who has been entangled in a dilemma created by the snare caused by this truth (i.e. he is unsure and does not know what to do) (57).

पुत्रशब्देन चैतद्धि नरकात्त्रायते पिता। रामस्तयोदितं श्रुत्वा शूलेनाभिहतो यथा।।58।।
व्यथितः कैकेयीं प्राह किं मामेवं प्रभाषसे। पित्रर्थे जीवितं दास्ये पिबेयं विषमुल्बणम्।।59।।
सीतां त्यक्ष्येऽथ कौसल्यां राज्यं चापि त्यजाम्यहम्।
अनाज्ञप्तोऽपि कुरुते पितुः कार्यं स उत्तमः।।60।।

putraśabdena caitaddhi narakāttrāyate pitā /
rāmastayoditaṃ śrutvā śūlenābhihato yathā //
vyathitaḥ kaikeyīṃ prāha kiṃ māmevaṃ prabhāṣase /
pitrarthe jīvitaṃ dāsye pibeyaṃ viṣamulbaṇam //
sītāṃ tyakṣye'tha kausalyāṃ rājyaṃ cāpi tyajāmyaham /
anājñapto'pi kurute pituḥ kāryaṃ sa uttamaḥ //

Because the literal meaning of the word 'Putra' (son) is the one who protects his father from going to hell'. Hearing these words of Kaikeyi, Sri Ram was anguished and hurt as if virtually pierced by a sharp pointed instrument. He said, 'Oh mother! Why do you talk with me like this today? I can lay my life for my father; drink poison for him (58-59), so much so that I can leave (forsake) even Sita, Kaushalya and the kingdom for him. That son who fulfils the desires of his father even without receiving any express instructions from him is considered the best amongst sons (60).

उक्तः करोति यः पुत्रः स मध्यम उदाहृतः। उक्तोऽपि कुरुते नैव स पुत्रो मल उच्यते।।61।।
अतः करोमि तत्सर्वं यन्मामाह पिता मम। सत्यं सत्यं करोम्येव रामो द्विर्नाभिभाषते।।62।।

uktaḥ karoti yaḥ putraḥ sa madhyama udāhṛtaḥ /
ukto'pi kurute naiva sa putro mala ucyate //
ataḥ karomi tatsarvaṃ yanmāmāha pitā mama /
satyaṃ satyaṃ karomyeva rāmo dvirnābhibhāṣate //

That son who does anything only after he receives express orders from his father is considered medium, and that son who disobeys him is like excreta (61). Hence, whatever the father has ordered (wished

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for me to do), I shall definitely implement it; this is the truth. Ram never says dubious, doubtful things' (62).

इति रामप्रतिज्ञां सा श्रुत्वा वक्तुं प्रचक्रमे। राम त्वदभिषेकार्थं संभाराः संभृताश्च ये।। 63।।
तैरेव भरतोऽवश्यमभिषेच्यः प्रियो मम। अपरेण वरेणाशु चीरवासा जटाधरः।। 64।।
वनं प्रयाहि शीघ्रं त्वमद्यैव पितुराज्ञया। चतुर्दश समास्तत्र वस मुन्यन्नभोजनः।। 65।।
एतदेव पितुस्तेऽद्य कार्यं त्वं कर्तुमर्हसि। राजा तु लज्जते वक्तुं त्वामेवं रघुनन्दन।। 66।।

iti rāmapratijñāṃ sā śrutvā vaktuṃ pracakrame /
rāma tvadbhiṣekārthaṃ saṃbhārāḥ saṃbhṛtāśca ye //
taireva bharato'vaśyamabhiṣecyaḥ priyo mama /
apareṇa vareṇāśu cīravāsā jaṭādharaḥ //
vanaṃ prayāhi śīghraṃ tvamadyaiva piturājñayā /
caturdaśa samāstatra vasa munyannabhojanaḥ //
etadeva pituste'dya kāryaṃ tvaṃ kartumarhasi /
rājā tu lajjate vaktuṃ tvāmevaṃ raghunandana //

Hearing this determination of Sri Ram, Kaikeyi began to say thus—'Oh Ram! The necessary paraphernalia and accoutrements collected for the purpose of your anointment (63) should be used instead for my son (Bharat); this is my first boon that is to be fulfilled. According to the second boon (or promise of the king), you should regard it as a deemed order from your father to accept garments/robes made from the bark of trees (birch tree) and make your hairs into matted tress and proceed forthwith to the forest, sustaining yourself on food befitting hermits and ascetics there for the next fourteen years (64-65). That is all; this is the work of your father that you should do. But the king is reluctant (or hesitant) to say these things to you himself' (66).

श्रीराम उवाच

भरतस्यैव राज्यं स्यादहं गच्छामि दण्डकान्। किन्तु राजा न वक्तीह मां न जानेऽत्र कारणम्।। 67।।
श्रुत्वैतद्रामवचनं दृष्ट्वा रामं पुरः स्थितम्। प्राह राजा दशरथो दुःखितो दुःखितं वचः।। 68।।
स्त्रीजितं भ्रान्तहृदयमुन्मार्गपरिवर्तिनम्। निगृह्य मां गृहाणेदं राज्यं पापं न तद्भवेत्।। 69।।

śrīrāma uvāca

bharatasyaiva rājyaṃ syādahaṃ gacchāmi daṇḍakān /
kintu rājā na vaktīha māṃ na jāne'tra kāraṇam //
śrutvaitadrāmavacanaṃ dṛṣṭvā rāmaṃ puraḥ sthitam /
prāha rājā daśaratho duḥkhito duḥkhitaṃ vacaḥ //

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strījitaṃ bhrāntahṛdayamunmārgaparivartinam /
nigṛhya māṃ gṛhāṇedaṃ rājyaṃ pāpaṃ na tadbhavet //

Sri Ram replied—'Oh mother! Let Bharat merrily enjoy the kingdom and I am going to the Dandakaranya forest immediately. But I can't understand why the king does not tell this to me directly?' (67). Hearing these words of Sri Ram and seeing him sitting in front of him, the anguished and miserable king Dashrath said these most regretful and contrite words (68), 'Oh Ram! Take this kingdom forcefully from me who am under the spell (control) of a woman, under illusions or wrong impressions, am the follower of unrighteous, sinful path, and am a sinful, unrighteous soul by willingly tying myself in shackles—you shall not be guilty of committing any sin or misdemeanours of any kind by doing so (69).

एवं चेदनृतं नैव मां स्पृशेद्रघुनन्दन। इत्युक्त्वा दुःखसन्तप्तो विललाप नृपस्तदा।।70।।
हा राम हा जगन्नाथ हा मम प्राणवल्लभ। मां विसृज्य कथं घोरं विपिनं गन्तुमर्हसि।।71।।

evaṃ cedanṛtaṃ naiva māṃ spṛśedraghunandana /
ityuktvā duḥkhasantapto vilalāpa nṛpastadā //
hā rāma hā jagannātha hā mama prāṇavallabha /
māṃ visṛjya kathaṃ ghoraṃ vipinaṃ gantumarhasi //

Oh Raghunandan! I too shall be absolved by not saying a lie (or literally, lie shall not touch me) by doing so'. Saying thus, the king began to wail and lament woefully (70). 'Oh Ram! Oh Lord of the world! Oh dear to my soul! How do you think it proper to go to the forest leaving me alone?' (71).

इति रामं समालिङ्ग्य मुक्तकण्ठो रुरोद ह। विसृज्य नयने रामः पितुः सजलपाणिना।।72।।
आश्वासयामास नृपं शनैः स नयकोविदः। किमत्र दुःखेन विभो राज्यं शासतु मेऽनुजः।।73।।

iti rāmaṃ samāliṅgya muktakaṇṭho ruroda ha /
visṛjya nayane rāmaḥ pituḥ sajalapāṇinā //
āśvāsayāmāsa nṛpaṃ śanaiḥ sa nayakovidaḥ /
kimatra duḥkhena vibho rājyaṃ śāstu me'nujaḥ //

Saying this, he (Dashrath) clasped (embraced) Sri Ram to his bosom and wept bitterly, openly and profusely. Then Sri Ram took some water in his hands and washed the tears of his father (72). Sri Ram, who is an expert in probity and propriety, rules of conduct and sanctioned code of behaviour, ethics and morality, began to console him most

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politely and diplomatically, slowly and soothingly comforting him. He said—'Oh Lord! If my younger brother Bharat rules the kingdom, what is there to be so sorrowful about it? (73).

अहं प्रतिज्ञां निस्तीर्य पुनर्यास्यामि ते पुरम्। राज्यात्कोटिगुणं सौख्यं मम राजन्वने सतः।। 74।।
त्वत्सत्यपालनं देवकार्यं चापि भविष्यति। कैकेय्याश्च प्रियो राजन्वनवासो महागुणः।।75।।

ahaṃ pratijñāṃ nistīrya punaryāsyāmi te puram: /
rājyātkoṭiguṇaṃ saukhyaṃ mama rājanvane sataḥ //
tvatsatyapālanaṃ devakāryaṃ cāpi bhaviṣyati /
kaikeyyāśca priyo rājanvanavāso mahāguṇaḥ //

I too shall fulfill this vow and return back to you at Ayodhya. And oh king, while staying in the forest, I shall be enjoying happiness which would be millions of times greater than that at Ayodhya (74). In this, your honour and truthfulness would be protected, the work of the Gods would be done, and the welfare of Kaikeyi would also be ascertained. Hence, oh king, there is a lot of goodness and virtue in my staying in the forest (75).

इदानीं गन्तुमिच्छामि व्येतु मातुश्च ह्रज्ज्वरः। सम्भाराश्चोपहीयन्तामभिषेकार्थमाहृताः।। 76।।
मातरं च समाश्वास्य अनुनीय च जानकीम्। आगत्य पादौ वन्दित्वा तव यास्ये सुखं वनम्।।77।।

idānīṃ gantumicchāmi vyetu mātuśca hṛjjvaraḥ /
sambhāraścopahrīyantāmabhiṣekārthamāhṛtāḥ //
mātaraṃ ca samāśvāsya anunīya ca jānakīm /
āgatya pādau vanditvā tava yāsye sukhaṃ vanam //

Now, I want to depart soon. Let the anguish of mother Kaikeyi be calmed down. Let the things assembled for my anointment be kept aside (76). After consoling mother Kaushalya and somehow explaining the situation to Janki (Sita), I shall come back soon, and after paying obeisance at your feet, I shall forthwith proceed to the forest' (77).

इत्युक्त्वा तु परिक्रम्य मातरं द्रष्टुमाययौ। कौसल्यापि हरेः पूजां कुरुते रामकारणात्।। 78।।
होमं च कारयामास ब्राह्मणेभ्यो ददौ धनम्। ध्यायते विष्णुमेकाग्रमनसा मौनमास्थिता।।79।।

ityuktvā tu parikramya mātaraṃ draṣṭumāyayau /
kausalyāpi hareḥ pūjāṃ kurute rāmakāraṇāt //
homaṃ ca kārayāmāsa brāhmaṇebhyo dadau dhanam /
dhyāyate viṣṇumekāgramanasā maunamāsthitā //

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Saying so, he circumambulated his father and came to meet his mother (Kaushalya). At that time she was worshipping Lord Vishnu for the welfare and well-being of Sri Ram (78). She had already done the ritualistic fire sacrifice and had given a lot of wealth as charity to Brahmins, and was presently observing silence and was deeply concentrating on Lord Vishnu (i.e. was meditating) (79).

अन्तःस्थमेकं घनचित्प्रकाशं निरस्तसर्वातिशयस्वरूपम्।
विष्णुं सदानन्दमयं हृदब्जे सा भावयन्ती न ददर्श रामम्।।80।।

antaḥsthamekaṃ ghanacitprakāśaṃ nirastasarvātiśayasvarūpam /
viṣṇuṃ sadānandamayaṃ hṛdabje sā bhāvayantī na dadarśa rāmam //

Being deeply engrossed in meditating on Lord Vishnu—who is omnipresent and all-pervading, an embodiment of all powers (i.e. almighty), is splendorous and radiant, an embodiment of love and compassion, eternally all blissful and the Lord God—she could not see Sri Ram arrive there (80).

***

Ayodhya Kand — Canto 4

Preparation of Sri Ram, Sita, Laxman for forest exile

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

ततः सुमित्रा दृष्ट्वैनं रामं राज्ञीं ससम्भ्रमा। कौसल्यां बोधयामास रामोऽयं समुपस्थितः।।1।।
श्रुत्वैव रामनामैषा बहिर्दृष्टिप्रवाहिता। रामं दृष्ट्वा विशालाक्षमालिङ्ग्याङ्के न्यवेशयत्।।2।।
मूर्ध्न्यवघ्राय पस्पर्श गात्रं नीलोत्पलच्छवि। भुङ्क्ष्व पुत्रेति च प्राह मिष्टमन्नं क्षुधार्दितः।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tataḥ sumitrā dṛṣṭvainaṃ rāmaṃ rājñīṃ sasambhramā /
kausalyāṃ bodhayāmāsa rāmo'yaṃ samupasthitaḥ //
śrutvaiva rāmanāmaiṣā bahirdṛṣṭipravāhitā /
rāmaṃ dṛṣṭvā viśālākṣamāliṅgyāṅke nyaveśayat //
mūrdhnyavaghrāya pasparśa gātraṃ nīlotpalacchavi /
bhuṅkṣva putreti ca prāha miṣṭamannaṃ kṣudhārtitaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Queen Sumitra, seeing Sri Ram standing silently with a somber mood in front, hesitantly woke

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Kaushalya up from her meditative trance and told her that he was waiting (1). As soon as she heard the name of Sri Ram, she became conscious of her surroundings, saw the broad-eyed Sri Ram, embraced him and made him sit on her laps (2). She smelt his head (as a token of affection), moved her hands with motherly love on his dark complexioned body, which resembled the hue of a blue lotus, and said lovingly, 'Oh son! You must be hungry. Eat something sweet (i.e. any sweet-meat of your choice)' (3).

रामः प्राह न मे मातर्भोजनावसरः कुतः। दण्डकागमने शीघ्रं मम कालोऽद्य निश्चितः।।4।।
कैकेयीवरदानेन सत्यसन्धः पिता मम। भरताय ददौ राज्यं ममाप्यारण्यमुत्तमम्।।5।।
चतुर्दश समास्तत्र ह्युषित्वा मुनिवेषधृक्। आगमिष्ये पुनः शीघ्रं न चिन्तां कर्तुमर्हसि।।6।।

rāmaḥ prāha na me mātarbhojanāvasaraḥ kutaḥ /
daṇḍakāgamane śīghraṃ mama kālo'dya niścitaḥ //
kaikeyīvaradānena satyasandhaḥ pitā mama /
bharatāya dadau rājyaṃ mamāpyāraṇyamuttamam //
caturdaśa samāstatra hyuṣitvā muniveṣadhṛk /
āgamiṣye punaḥ śīghraṃ na cintāṃ kartumarhasi //

Sri Ram replied with a sense of urgency, 'Oh mother! I do not have the time to eat because this time has been fixed for me to proceed to Dandakaranya forest today (4). My most truthful and honourable father has promised mother Kaikeyi under oath to give the kingdom to Bharat and send me to exile in the forest (5). I shall live there for 14 years attired as a hermit, and thereafter I shall return as soon as possible. You should not worry at all' (6).

तच्छ्रुत्वा सहसोद्विग्ना मूर्च्छिता पुनरुत्थिता। आह रामं सुदुःखार्ता दुःखसागरसम्प्लुता।।7।।
यदि राम वनं सत्यं यासि चेन्नय मामपि। त्वद्विहीना क्षणार्द्धं वा जीवितं धारये कथम्।।8।।
यथा गौर्बालकं वत्सं त्यक्त्वा तिष्ठेन्न कुत्रचित्।
तथैव त्वां न शक्नोमि त्यक्तुं प्राणात्प्रियं सुतम्।।9।।

tacchrutvā sahasodvignā mūrcchitā punarutthitā /
āha rāmaṃ suduḥkhārtā duḥkhasāgarasaṃplutā //
yadi rāma vanaṃ satyaṃ yāsi cennaya māmapi /
tvadvihīnā kṣaṇārddhaṃ vā jīvitaṃ dhāraye katham //
yathā gaurbālakaṃ vatsaṃ tyaktvā tiṣṭhenna kutracit /
tathaiva tvāṃ na śaknomi tyaktuṃ prāṇātpriyaṃ sutam //

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Hearing these shocking words spoken all of a sudden, Kaushalya fainted due to overwhelming surge of sorrow and grief. When she recovered consciousness, she sort of tossed up and down in a heaving ocean of great sorrows and anguish, and said dismally to Sri Ram (7), 'Oh Sri Ram! If you are really going to the forest, then take me along; how can I survive even for a fraction of a second without you (8). Even as a cow cannot live anywhere without her young calf, I too can't leave you, my dear son (9).

भरताय प्रसन्नश्चेद्राज्यं राजा प्रयच्छतु। किमर्थं वनवासाय त्वामाज्ञापयति प्रियम्।। 10।।
कैकेय्या वरदो राजा सर्वस्वं वा प्रयच्छतु। त्वया किमपराद्धं हि कैकेय्या वा नृपस्य वा।। 11।।

bharatāya prasannaścedrājyaṃ rājā prayacchatu /
kimarthaṃ vanavāsāya tvāmājñāpayati priyam //
kaikeyyā varado rājā sarvasvaṃ vā prayacchatu /
tvayā kimaparāddhaṃ hi kaikeyyā vā nṛpasya vā //

If the king is so pleased with Bharat, he should surely handover the kingdom to him. But why does he order you, dear son, to go to the forest? (10). By giving a boon to Kaikeyi, let the king give all that he has (i.e. his kingdom) to her (and we have no objection to it), but what harm have you done to either the king or to Kaikeyi? (11).

पिता गुरुर्यथा राम तवाहमधिका ततः। पित्राऽऽज्ञप्तो वनं गन्तुं वारयेयमहं सुतम्।। 12।।
यदि गच्छसि मद्वाक्यमुल्लङ्घ्य नृपवाक्यतः। तदा प्राणान्परित्यज्य गच्छामि यमसादनम्।। 13।।

pitā gururyathā rāma tavāhamadhikā tataḥ /
pitrā''jñapto vanaṃ gantuṃ vārayeyamahaṃ sutam //
yadi gacchasi madvākyamullaṅghya nṛpavākyataḥ /
tadā prāṇānparityajya gacchāmi yamasādanam //

Oh Ram! Even as your father is your Guru (i.e. revered and honourable), I am of a greater importance to you (being your mother). If the father has told you to go to the forest, then I am stopping you (12). If you defy my words and go to the forest on the orders of your father, I shall leave my life (i.e. die) and go to hell (because I shall have committed suicide and will have violated the orders of my husband given to his righteous son)' (13).

लक्ष्मणोऽपि ततः श्रुत्वा कौसल्यावचनं रुषा। उवाच राघवं वीक्ष्य दहन्निव जगत्त्रयम्।। 14।।
उन्मत्तं भ्रान्तमनसं कैकेयीवशवर्तिनम्। बद्ध्वा निहन्मि भरतं तद्बन्धून्मातुलानपि।। 15।।
अद्य पश्यन्तु मे शौर्यं लोकान्प्रदहतः पुरा। राम त्वमभिषेकाय कुरु यत्नमरिन्दम।। 16।।

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lakṣmaṇo'pi tataḥ śrutvā kausalyāvacanaṃ ruṣā /
uvāca rāghavaṃ vīkṣya dahanniva jagattrayam //
unmattaṃ bhrāntamanasaṃ kaikeyīvaśavartinam /
baddhvā nihanmi bharataṃ tadbandhūnmātulānapi //
adya paśyantu me śauryaṃ lokānpradahataḥ purā /
rāma tvamabhiṣekāya kuru yatnamarindama //

Then, hearing Kaushalya's mournful and distressed words, Laxman looked at Sri Ram with fierce, stern eyes full of disdain, and spoke angrily as if to burn the three worlds by his wrath (14), 'I shall tie up the king who is mad and intoxicated, misled and under delusions, infatuated and under the spell of Kaikeyi. I shall kill Bharat along with his accomplice maternal uncle and other aides (15). Let them first see today my manhood which is virile and potent enough to burn and scorch all the Lokas like the fire spitting out from the legendary serpent (Sheshnath) at the time of dooms day. Oh Sri Ram, the vanquisher of enemies! You should prepare for the anointment (16).

धनुष्पाणिरहं तत्र निहन्यां विघ्नकारिणः। इति ब्रुवन्तं सौमित्रिमालिङ्ग्य रघुनन्दनः॥ 17॥
शूरोऽसि रघुशार्दूल ममात्यन्तहिते रतः। जानामि सर्वं ते सत्यं किन्तु तत्समयो न हि॥ 18॥

dhanuṣpāṇirahaṃ tatra nihantya vighnakāriṇaḥ /
iti bruvantaṃ saumitrimāliṅgya raghunandanaḥ //
śūro'si raghuśārdūla mamātyantahite rataḥ /
jānāmi sarvaṃ te satyaṃ kintu tatsamayo na hi //

I shall kill all those, with a bow and arrow in my hands, who ever try to cause (or create) any hurdles in it (i.e. your anointment)'. When Laxman had contemptuously said so, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) clasped him to his bosom and said to pacify him (17), 'You are like a tiger in the Raghu's clan! You are very valorous and brave, and my greatest well-wisher. Whatever you say I know is true, but this is not the proper time for it (18).

यदिदं दृश्यते सर्वं राज्यं देहादिकं च यत्। यदि सत्यं भवेत्तत्र आयासः सफलश्च ते॥ 19॥
भोगा मेघवितानस्थविद्युल्लेखेव चञ्चलाः। आयुरप्यग्निसन्तप्तलोहस्थजलबिन्दुवत्॥ 20॥
यथा व्यालगलस्थोऽपि भेको दंशानपेक्षते। तथा कालाहिना ग्रस्तो लोको भोगानशाश्वतान्॥ 21॥

yadidaṃ dṛśyate sarvaṃ rājyaṃ dehādikaṃ ca yat /
yadi satyaṃ bhavettatra āyāsaḥ saphalaśca te //

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bhogā meghavitānasthavidyullekheva cañcalāḥ /
āyurapyagnisantaptalohasthajalabinduvat //
yathā vyālagalastho'pi bheko daṁśānapekṣate /
tathā kālāhinā grasto loko bhogānaśāśvatān //

Your efforts would have been truly successful if this kingdom and the body etc., which are visible, had been true (19). But these comforts (enjoyments) of the world are like the transient and temporary lightening in the tent of (i.e. canopy, cover, shade represented by) the clouds, whereas life is as momentary as a drop of water on a piece of iron made red hot with fire (20). Even as a frog greedily looks at a fly while itself lying in the mouth of a snake (who is ready to gobble it up, i.e. it is on the verge of death itself), the people too yearn rapaciously for the perishable, transient and temporary comforts and pleasures of this mundane, deluding world inspite of being regularly devoured by the serpent represented by Kaal (death) (21).

करोति दुःखेन हि कर्मतन्त्रं शरीरभोगार्थमहर्निशं नरः।
देहस्तु भिन्नः पुरुषात्समीक्ष्यते को वात्र भोगः पुरुषेण भुज्यते।। 22।।
पितृमातृसुतभ्रातृदारबन्ध्वादिसङ्गमः। प्रपायामिव जन्तूनां नद्यां काष्ठौघवच्चलः।। 23।।

karoti duḥkhena hi karmatantraṃ śarīrabhogārthamaharniśaṃ naraḥ /
dehastu bhinnaḥ puruṣātsamīkṣyate ko vātra bhogaḥ puruṣeṇa bhujyate //
pitṛmātṛsutabhrātṛdārabandhavādisaṅgamaḥ /
prapāyāmiva jantūnāṃ nadyāṃ kāṣṭhaughavaccalaḥ //

What a surprise that a man suffers so much and indulges in various deeds and actions day and night just for the pleasures of the sense organs of this body. If he simply realises and understands that this body is different (i.e. a separate entity) from the soul (Atma) which is his truthful identity, then, say, how can he derive any enjoyment or pleasure from it? (22). The contact or relationships that one has with one's father, mother, son, brother, wife, kin, relatives and friends are like those who assemble to drink water at a water-hut, and are as temporary, illusive, transient or coincidental as a collection of sticks wobbling and tossing about wildly in the swift currents of water in a river (23).

छायेव लक्ष्मीश्चपला प्रतीता तारुण्यमम्बूर्मिवदध्रुवं च।
स्वप्नोपमं स्त्रीसुखमायुरल्पं तथापि जन्तोरभिमान एषः।।24।।

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संसृतिः स्वप्नसदृशी सदा रोगादिसङ्कुला। गन्धर्वनगरप्रख्या मूढस्तामनुवर्तते।।25।।

chāyeva lakṣmīścapalā pratītā tāruṇyamambūrmivadadhruvaṃ ca /
svapnopamaṃ strīsukhamāyuralpaṃ tathāpi jantorabhimāna eṣaḥ //
saṁsṛtiḥ svapnasadṛśī sadā rogādisaṅkulā /
gāndharavanagaraprakhyā mūḍhastāmanuvartate //

It is evident without any doubt that Laxmi (worldly wealth, money, prosperity) is as transient, temporary and illusive as a shadow, youth is as perishable and short-lived as a wave in water, comfort of woman is as false and nightmarish as a dream, and life is of a most minimal (short) duration—inspite of that, the creature has great pride in them (24). This world is verily a collection of various diseases and torments (i.e. full of distress, grief, agonies, sorrows, troubles and tribulations), as well as is false and illusive like a dream and a city of Gandharvas (celestial musicians)—only foolish and ignorant ones regard it as true, and indulgently follow it and remain indulged in it (25).

आयुष्यं क्षीयते यस्मादादित्यस्य गतागतैः। दृष्ट्वान्येषां जरामृत्यू कथञ्चिन्नैव बुध्यते।। 26।।
स एव दिवसः सैव रात्रिरित्येव मूढधीः। भोगाननुपतत्येव कालवेगं न पश्यति।। 27।।

āyuṣyaṃ kṣīyate yasmādādityasya gatāgataiḥ /
dṛṣṭvānyeṣāṃ jarāmṛtyū kathañcinnaiva budhyate //
sa eva divasaḥ saiva rātrirityeva mūḍhadhīḥ /
bhogānanupatatyeva kālavegaṃ na paśyati //

The age (or life) is steadily decaying (i.e. wasting away, shortening, coming to an end) with the rise and setting of the daily sun. Old age and death of others is being observed by the creatures daily, but still the foolish ones do not wake up to the reality (26). The day and night follow the same pattern, but an ignorant fool pursues the material comforts and pleasures of the sense objects without observing the passage of Kaal (time, death). That is, he does not wake up to the fact that death is fast approaching him (27).

प्रतिक्षणं क्षरत्येतदायुरामघटाम्बुवत्। सपत्ना इव रोगौघाः शरीरं प्रहरन्त्यहो।। 28।।
जरा व्याघ्रीव पुरतस्तर्जयन्त्यवतिष्ठते। मृत्युः सहैव यात्येष समयं सम्प्रतीक्षते।।29।।

pratikṣaṇaṃ kṣaratyetadāyurāmaghaṭāmbuvat /
sapatnā iva rogaughāḥ śarīraṃ praharantyaho //
jarā vyāghrīva puratastarjayantyavatiṣṭhate /
mṛtyuḥ sahaiva yātyeṣa samayaṃ sampratīkṣate //

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Age (life) is decaying and wasting away every moment like water filled in an unripe clay pot (for it gradually seeps out), while the hordes of various diseases are destroying the body gradually like so many besieging enemies fighting a war of attrition (28). Old age is menacingly standing in the front like a frightening, ferocious, cruel and savage lioness, while death walks alongside it waiting for the opportune moment to strike (or pounce on the victim like a lioness does on its prey) (29).

देहेऽहंभावमापन्नो राजाहं लोकविश्रुतः। इत्यस्मिन्मनुते जन्तुः कृमिविड्भस्मसंज्ञिते।। 30।।
त्वगस्थिमांसविण्मूत्ररेतोरक्तादिसंयुतः। विकारी परिणामी च देह आत्मा कथं वद।। 31।।
यमास्थाय भवाँल्लोकं दग्धुमिच्छति लक्ष्मण। देहाभिमानिनः सर्वे दोषाः प्रादुर्भवन्ति हि।। 32।।

dehe'haṁbhāvamāpanno rājāhaṃ lokaviśrutaḥ /
ityasminmanute jantuḥ kṛmiviḍbhasmasaṁjñite //
tvagasthimāṁsaviṇmūtraretoraktādisaṁyutaḥ /
vikārī pariṇāmī ca deha ātmā kathaṃ vada //
yamāsthāya bhavāṁllokaṃ dagdhumicchati lakṣmaṇa /
dehābhimāninaḥ sarve doṣāḥ prādurbhavanti hi //

Only those who have egoistic attachments with this abhorable body resembling such detestable things as germs or worms, excreta and ash, consider themselves as 'I am a world famous king' (30). Oh Laxman! Think deeply and then say that the body relying upon the strength of (or using the medium of) which you wish to burn and scorch the world (see verse no. 16), and which is made up of skin, bones, flesh, excreta, urine, sperms/ova and blood etc.—how can that resultant evil, faulty and filthy body ever be the Atma (soul; or pure self)? Oh brother! All faults arise (i.e. make their appearance) in a person who is proud of his (gross) body (31-32).

देहोऽहमिति या बुद्धिरविद्या सा प्रकीर्तिता। नाहं देहश्चिदात्मेति बुद्धिर्विद्येति भण्यते।। 33।।
अविद्या संसृतेर्हेतुर्विद्या तस्या निवर्तिका। तस्माद्यत्नः सदा कार्यो विद्याभ्यासे मुमुक्षुभिः।
कामक्रोधादयस्तत्र शत्रवः शत्रुसूदन।। 34।।

deho'hamiti yo buddhiravidyā sā prakīrtitā /
nāhaṃ dehaścidātmeti buddhirvidyeti bhaṇyate //
avidyā saṁsṛterheturvidyā tasyā nivartikā /
tasmādyatnaḥ sadā kāryo vidyābhyāse mumukṣubhiḥ /
kāmakrodhādayastatra śatravaḥ śatrusūdana //

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The fallacious thinking that 'I am the body' (i.e. I am recognised by my physical body or my true identity is the gross body) is called ignorance, while the belief or realisation that 'I am not the body, but the pure consciousness or soul' is self realisation, enlightenment, true knowledge and wisdom (33). Ignorance and delusions are the cause of the world representing birth and death, while wisdom, truthful knowledge and enlightenment frees or delivers one from it. Hence, the seekers of emancipation and salvation should strive to gain true wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment. Oh the vanquisher of enemies! Lust, greed, yearnings, anger etc. are the enemies that create obstacles and hindrances in this path (34).

तत्रापि क्रोध एवालं मोक्षविघ्नाय सर्वदा। येनाविष्टः पुमान्हन्ति पितृभ्रातृसुहृत्सखीन्।। 35।।
क्रोधमूलो मनस्तापः क्रोधः संसारबन्धनम्। धर्मक्षयकरः क्रोधस्तस्मात्क्रोधं परित्यज।।36।।
क्रोध एष महान् शत्रुस्तृष्णा वैतरणी नदी। सन्तोषो नन्दनवनं शान्तिरेव हि कामधुक्।।37।।

tatrāpi krodha evālaṃ mokṣavighnāya sarvadā /
yenāviṣṭaḥ pumānhanti pitṛbhrātṛsuhṛtsakhīn //
krodhamūlo manastāpaḥ krodhaḥ saṁsārabandhanam /
dharmakṣayakaraḥ krodhastasmātkrodhaṃ parityaja //
krodha eṣa mahān śatrustṛṣṇā vaitaraṇī nadī /
santoṣo nandanavanaṃ śāntireva hi kāmadhuk //

Out of these, anger, wrath and maliciousness are sufficient to put an obstacle (i.e. a spanner in the wheel) in obtaining emancipation and salvation, because under its spell a person kills even his father, mother, dear ones, brothers and friends (35). The root cause of mental agitations and anguish, perplexity and vengeance, is anger, vengeance and maliciousness. It is the evil anger that ties one in worldly shackles to this mundane world (because he thinks that he has to settle scores with someone, and strives for it, resulting in a chain of actions and reactions). This results in decay or destruction of Dharma (righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, noble thoughts and conduct). Therefore, you should forsake anger (36). This anger, malice, wrath and vengeance are the great enemy; attachments, infatuations and yearnings are the legendary 'Vaitarni river' (the mythical river that the soul has to cross before it can enter heaven); contentedness, satisfaction and having no desires or yearnings whatsoever is the 'Nandan Van' (the forest in heaven marked by peace, tranquility,

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serenity, happiness and profusion); and peace, tranquility, serenity, bliss and calmness of mind and heart are the 'Kamdhenu cow' (the celestial cow of the Gods which is all wish fulfilling) (37).

तस्माच्छान्तिं भजस्वाद्य शत्रुरेवं भवेन्न ते। देहेन्द्रियमनःप्राणबुद्ध्यादिभ्यो विलक्षणः।। 38।।
आत्मा शुद्धः स्वयंज्योतिरविकारी निराकृतिः। यावद्देहेन्द्रियप्राणैर्भिन्नत्वं नात्मनो विदुः।।39।।
तावत्संसारदुःखौघैः पीड्यन्ते मृत्युसंयुताः। तस्मात्त्वं सर्वदा भिन्नमात्मानं हृदि भावय।।40।।
बुद्ध्यादिभ्यो बहिः सर्वमनुवर्तस्व मा खिदः। भुञ्जन्प्रारब्धमखिलं सुखं वा दुःखमेव वा।।41।।

tasmācchāntiṃ bhajasvādya śatrurevaṃ bhavenna te /
dehendriyamanaḥprāṇabuddhyādibhyo vilakṣaṇaḥ //
ātmā śuddhaḥ svayaṁjyotiravikārī nirākṛtiḥ /
yāvaddehendriyaprāṇairbhinnatvaṃ nātmano viduḥ //
tāvatsaṁsāraduḥkhaughaiḥ pīḍyante mṛtyusaṁyutāḥ /
tasmāttvaṃ sarvadā bhinnamātmānaṃ hṛdi bhāvaya //
buddhyādibhyo bahiḥ sarvamanuvartasva mā khidaḥ /
bhuñjanprārabdhamakhilaṃ sukhaṃ vā duḥkhameva vā //

Hence, be at ease with yourself and calm down. By doing so, the enemy (in the form of anger) will not have any affect on you. The soul or Atma is different and separate from the body, the sense organs, the emotive mind and heart, the vital winds called Prans, and the intellect and discrimination faculty; it is pure, self illuminated, faultless, without any blemish or tarnish, and is an attributeless, formless entity. As long as a person does not realise or understand that the Atma (soul, pure consciousness, 'the real self') is different and distinct from the body, sense organs and vital winds etc., he remains tied (or entangled) to the snare of life and death (because the gross body and its constituents parts are perishable). Consequentially, he has to suffer from hordes of worldly agonies and sorrows, torments and tribulations. Therefore, you must treat your Atma, which is pure conscious self, as separate and distinct from your mind-intellect apparatus etc., follow this external world of deeds and actions with a behaviour consonant with this moral and spiritual outlook, and bear (cope with) both the sorrows and joys—whatever you get as destined for you by your previous deeds—with equanimity and forbearance, without having any mental anguish, restlessness, contrition and regrets (i.e. any kind of mental tumult) whatsoever (38-41).

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प्रवाहपतितं कार्यं कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यसे। बाह्ये सर्वत्र कर्तृत्वमावहन्नपि राघव।। 42।।
अन्तःशुद्धस्वभावस्त्वं लिप्यसे न च कर्मभिः। एतन्मयोदितं कृत्स्नं हृदि भावय सर्वदा।। 43।।

pravāhapatitaṃ kāryaṃ kurvannapi na lipyase /
bāhye sarvatra kartṛtvamāvahannapi rāghava //
antaḥśuddhasvabhāvastvaṃ lipyase na ca karmabhiḥ /
etanmayoditaṃ kṛtsnaṃ hṛdi bhāvaya sarvadā //

Oh Raghav (Laxman)! If you continue to do deeds using the external sense organs of the body, as and when those deeds present themselves before you, requiring your attention as per the destined course of action (destiny), you still would not be bound in the shackles created by those deeds (because your mind and heart would remain detached from the deeds and their results) (42). Being internally and mentally free from the encumbrances attendant with having 'Rag and Dwesh' (having infatuations, attachments and the sense of belonging, and the opposite notion of having hatred, malice or ill-will towards anyone respectively), as well as by having a pure, uncorrupt and righteous way of thinking, you shall be deemed not to be indulgent, involved or attached with those actions or deeds that your body does. Ponder deeply in your heart on all that I have said, and always keep it in your mind (43).

संसारदुःखैरखिलैर्बाध्यसे न कदाचन। त्वमप्यम्ब मयाऽऽदिष्टं हृदि भावय नित्यदा।। 44।।
समागमं प्रतीक्षस्व न दुःखैः पीड्यसे चिरम्। न सदैकत्र संवासः कर्ममार्गानुवर्तिनाम्।।45।।
यथा प्रवाहपतितप्लवानां सरितां तथा। चतुर्दशसमासङ्ख्या क्षणार्द्धमिव जायते।। 46।।
अनुमन्यस्व मामम्ब दुःखं सन्त्यज्य दूरतः। एवं चेत्सुखसंवासो भविष्यति वने मम।। 47।।

saṁsāraduḥkhairakhilairbādhyase na kadācana /
tvamapyamba mayā''diṣṭaṃ hṛdi bhāvaya nityadā //
samāgamaṃ pratīkṣasva na duḥkhaiḥ pīḍyase ciram /
na sadaikatra saṁvāsaḥ karmamārgānuvartinām //
yathā pravāhapatitaplavānāṃ saritāṃ tathā /
caturdaśasamāsaṅkhyā kṣaṇārddhamiva jāyate //
anumanyasva māmamba duḥkhaṃ santyajya dūrataḥ /
evaṃ cetsukhasaṁvāso bhaviṣyati vane mama //

By following this (my advise), you shall never be hindered (i.e. bogged or cowed down) by the various sorrows, agonies, troubles and

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tribulations of this mundane world'. Then Sri Ram addressed his mother, 'Oh mother (Kaushalya)! You should also pay attention to and deeply ponder over what I have said on a regular basis (i.e. persistently, constantly, daily) (44), and wait for the time when I shall meet you again (upon my coming back from the forest after fourteen years). You will not have sorrows and agonies for long. Creatures who are tied to the snare of their deeds and their incumbent results cannot always expect to have co-existence (45)—even as boats without sails, which are floating down the swift currents of a river, do not always remain together. Oh mother! This seemingly long fourteen year period will fly away as if it were only half of a moment. All of you remove your sorrows and lamentations, and give me permission to proceed to the forest. If you do so, I shall live happily (without any regrets and sense of guilt of being the cause of agonies and anguish to others) in the forest' (46-47).

[Note :—verse nos. 18-44 can be called the Gospel of Sri Ram for Laxman.]

इत्युक्त्वा दण्डवन्मातुः पादयोरपतच्चिरम्। उत्थाप्याङ्के समावेश्य आशीर्भिरभ्यनन्दयत्।। 48।।
सर्वे देवाः सगन्धर्वा ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवादयः। रक्षन्तु त्वां सदा यान्तं तिष्ठन्तं निद्रया युतम्।। 49।।

ityuktvā daṇḍavanmātuḥ pādayorapatacciram /
utthāpyāṅke samāveśya āśīrbhirabhyanandayat //
sarve devāḥ sagandharvā brahmaviṣṇuśivādayaḥ /
rakṣantu tvāṃ sadā yāntaṃ tiṣṭhantaṃ nidrayā yutam //

Having said so, he (Sri Ram) lay on the feet of his mother, prostrated like a stick, for a long time. After that, the mother lifted him and seated him on her laps, blessed and praised him (48). She said, 'Let Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, along with the Gandharvas (demigods; celestial musicians) and all other Gods, always protect you while you walk, sit or sleep (in the forest)' (49).

इति प्रस्थापयामास समालिङ्ग्य पुनः पुनः। लक्ष्मणोऽपि तदा रामं नत्वा हर्षाश्रुगद्गदः।। 50।।
आह राम ममान्तःस्थः संशयोऽयं त्वया हृतः। यास्यामि पृष्ठतो राम सेवां कर्तुं तदादिश।। 51।।
अनुगृह्णीष्व मां राम नोचेत्प्राणांस्त्यजाम्यहम्। तथेति राघवोऽप्याह लक्ष्मणं याहि माचिरम्।। 52।।

iti prasthāpayāmāsa samāliṅgya punaḥ punaḥ /
lakṣmaṇo'pi tadā rāmaṃ natvā harṣāśrugadgadaḥ //
āha rāma mamāntaḥsthaḥ saṁśayo'yaṃ tvayā hṛtaḥ /
yāsyāmi pṛṣṭhato rāma sevāṃ kartuṃ tadādiśa //

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anugṛhṇīṣva māṃ rāma nocetprāṇāṁstyajāmyaham /
tatheti rāghavo'pyāha lakṣmaṇaṃ yāhi māciram //

In this way, clasping him repeatedly to her bosom, the mother bade a tearful farewell to Sri Ram with a heavy heart. Then Laxman filled his eyes with tears of joy and exhilaration, and said to him with a voice chocked with emotions, 'Oh Sri Ram! You have removed all my internal doubts, confusions and indecisions. I shall now follow you to serve you (in the forest). Give me your consent for it (51). Show mercy and grace upon me; otherwise, I shall leave my body (i.e. die)'. Raghav (Sri Ram) replied to him, saying, 'Alright, come along. Do not delay' (52).

प्रतस्थे तां समाधातुं गतः सीतापतिर्विभुः। आगतं पतिमालोक्य सीता सुस्मितभाषिणी।। 53।।
स्वर्णपात्रस्थसलिलैः पादौ प्रक्षाल्य भक्तितः। पप्रच्छ पतिमालोक्य देव किं सेनया विना।।54।।
आगतोऽसि गतः कुत्र श्वेतच्छत्रं च ते कुतः। वादित्राणि न वाद्यन्ते किरीटादिविवर्जितः।।55।।

pratasthe tāṃ samādhātuṃ gataḥ sītāpatirvibhuḥ /
āgataṃ patimālokya sītā susmitabhāṣiṇī //
svarṇapātrasthasalilaiḥ pādau prakṣālya bhaktitaḥ /
papraccha patimālokya deva kiṃ senayā vinā //
āgato'si gataḥ kutra śvetacchatraṃ ca te kutaḥ /
vāditrāṇi na vādyante kirīṭādivivarjitaḥ //

After that, the husband of Sita, who is honoured and renowned as 'Vibho' (i.e. one who is omnipresent, almighty, magnanimous and eternal), proceeded to his own palace to comfort and explain the developments to her. Then Sita, who used to speak softly with a sweet and pleasant smile, saw her husband coming (53). She brought water in a golden pot and reverentially washed his feet, and asked him, 'Oh Lord! Why have you come alone without your retinue (i.e. royal escort)? (54). Where had you gone to in the morning? Where is your white ceremonial umbrella? Why have the musical instruments stopped playing, and why are you devoid of a crown and the tiara on your head along with other ornaments befitting a prince? (55).

सामन्तराजसहितः सम्भ्रमान्नागतोऽसि किम्। इति स्म सीतया पृष्टो रामः सस्मितमब्रवीत्।। 56।।
राज्ञा मे दण्डकारण्ये राज्यं दत्तं शुभेऽखिलम्। अतस्तत्पालनार्थाय शीघ्रं यास्यामि भामिनि।।57।।

sāmantarājasahitaḥ sambhramānnāgato'si kim /
iti smasītayā pṛṣṭo rāmaḥ sasmitamabravīt //

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rājñā me daṇḍakāraṇye rājyaṃ dattaṃ śubhe'khilam /
atastatpālanārthāya śīghraṃ yāsyāmi bhāmini //

Why have you not come with regal pomp and pageantry, accompanied by a retinue of other subordinate kings and ministers?' When Sita asked these questions, Sri Ram smiled and replied (56), 'Oh the auspicious, blessed one! The father has given me the entire kinghood of a place called 'Dandakaranya', so oh noble lady, I shall proceed soon to take charge (care) of it (57).

अद्यैव यास्यामि वनं त्वं तु श्वश्रूसमीपगा। शुश्रूषां कुरु मे मातुर्न मिथ्यावादिनो वयम्।। 58।।
इति ब्रुवन्तं श्रीरामं सीता भीताब्रवीद्वचः। किमर्थं वनराज्यं ते पित्रा दत्तं महात्मना।। 59।।

adyaiva yāsyāmi vanaṃ tvaṃ tu śvaśrūsamīpagā /
śuśrūṣāṃ kuru me māturna mithyāvādino vayam //
iti bruvantaṃ śrīrāmaṃ sītā bhītābravīdvacaḥ /
kimarthaṃ vanarājyaṃ te pitrā dattaṃ mahātmanā //

I shall go to the forest today; you should go to your mother-in-law and remain there serving her. I do not tell any lie' (58). When Sri Ram had said so, Sita was stunned, scared and horrified. She fearfully asked him, 'Why has your great father given you the kinghood of a forest?' (59).

तामाह रामः कैकेय्यै राजा प्रीतो वरं ददौ। भरताय ददौ राज्यं वनवासं ममानघे।। 60।।
चतुर्दश समास्तत्र वासो मे किल याचितः। तया देव्या ददौ राजा सत्यवादी दयापरः।।61।।

tāmāha rāmaḥ kaikeyyai rājā prīto varaṃ dadau /
bharatāya dadau rājyaṃ vanavāsaṃ mamānaghe //
caturdaśa samāstatra vāso me kila yācitaḥ /
tayā devyā dadau rājā satyavādī dayāparaḥ //

Sri Ram replied, 'Oh Anagh (sinless, pure, faultless one)! The king was pleased with Kaikeyi and granted her two boons, by one of which he was pleased to give the reign of the kingdom to Bharat, while invoking the other one to give exile to me (60). The Devi (i.e. the honourable lady; Kaikeyi) had asked for fourteen years of exile for me, so the truthful and merciful king had acceded to her wishes and gave that boon to her (61).

[Note—By saying that the king was 'merciful', Sri Ram means to say that he couldn't bear the distressed and miserable condition of his beloved wife Kaikeyi, so he decided to oblige her and remove the cause of her

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pain by giving these two boon to her. He could have rescinded on his earlier vows and refuse to oblige her on any absurd demand that she made, but for the fact that he is 'truthful'.]

अतः शीघ्रं गमिष्यामि मा विघ्नं कुरु भामिनि। श्रुत्वा तद्रामबचनं जानकी प्रीतिसंयुता।। 62।।
अहमग्रे गमिष्यामि वनं पश्चात्त्वमेष्यसि। इत्याह मां विना गन्तुं तव राघव नोचितम्।। 63।।

ataḥ śīghraṃ gamiṣyāmi mā vighnaṃ kuru bhāmini /
śrutvā tadrāmavacanaṃ jānakī prītisaṁyutā //
ahamagre gamiṣyāmi vanaṃ paścāttvameṣyasi /
ityāha māṃ vinā gantuṃ tava rāghava nocitam //

Hence, oh noble lady (i.e. my dear wife)! I shall go there soon. Do not create any obstacles in this'. Hearing these resolute words from Sri Ram, Sita said most cheerfully, 'I shall go to the forest first; you come behind me. Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! It is not proper for you to go to the forest leaving me behind' (62-63).

[Note—The words 'first' and 'behind' have been cleverly used here, and Sita taking the first step has a great significance. It has repeatedly been emphasised elsewhere that the Lord does not do anything himself or left to his own accord, but uses his 'Shakti' to carry out his desires to fruition. This Shakti has two forms—viz. the cosmic 'Adi Shakti', and the other is the 'Maya Shakti'. The Adi Shakti is the primary, supreme, infinite and stupendous energy that is responsible for starting and carrying forward the process of creation. This force of Nature not only initiated the magnificent process but also ensured that the good and the righteous forces are never eclipsed by the unrighteous and evil ones. When this happens, that Shakti reveals itself in the forms of the different Goddesses, such as Durga, Mahakali etc., to vanquish the evil forces and restore balance in favour of constructive and positive forces. On the other hand, in order to keep the wheel of creation turning perpetually, Brahm's other tool is the Maya Shakti, which is the delusions created by it to keep the creatures yoked to the wheel of creation and destruction, represented by constant birth and death, and forcing them to keep it turning endlessly by remaining ignorant of the actual truth about themselves and their origin. This Maya fools the creature into believing things that are apparent, but not the actual truth. In our story of the Ramayan, Lord Ram represents Brahm, while Sita is that cosmic Shakti. The very purpose of Lord Ram manifesting himself as a human upon the earth was that the evil forces had become ascendant and had almost eclipsed the righteous ones. So he had to bring along that Shakti of his with

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him in order to successfully accomplish the task. If that Maya had not accompanied the Principal, i.e. Lord Ram, no effective work could have been possibly done, perhaps because delusions were part of the game plan, for otherwise the Lord's true identity would have been revealed and the whole strategy might have failed. So, the incident of Sita taking the initiative has a great symbolic importance here. A similar incident occurs in canto 5, verse no.42-43 where Sita takes the initiative to board the chariot first, before the Lord, at the time of their departure for the forest. Presently, Sita here asks Ram to 'follow' her, and she implies that from now onwards, she is in charge, as it were! Sri Ram might have stayed in the forest as a reclusive hermit and do Tapa, because that is actually what Kaikeyi had demanded. Even if disturbed by the demons, he might have shown mercy on them because of his merciful and benevolent nature. But Sita ensured that it would not be so, because that would have defeated the very purpose for which the supreme Lord had taken so much trouble. Further, there is another symbolic meaning of Sita taking the first step and preceding Lord Ram to the forest—and that was to show that the wise, self realised and enlightened supreme Being had to suffer so much in the forest because of the Maya accompanying him as a tag, as is evident from the very story itself, for had it not been for Sita's desire for the golden deer and her subsequent abduction by Ravana, the Lord would have lived peacefully and needn't have had to wail for her, take the indescribable troubles for searching her, going all the way to the tip of the land to the shore of the ocean, fight the legendary war with Ravana with so horrible blood shed, and suffer from the moral dilemma and anguish of her second separation from him when she had to be sent to exile, where his two sons Lav and Kush were born, on some absurd insinuations made by some obscure man, and the subsequent pain and grief that the Lord had to suffer for the rest of the period of his sojourn here on the earth. This is to warn the creatures to be ware of Maya, for she would not hesitate to take the initiative to trap the creature if he is not himself vigilant. See verse nos.75-78 below which explicitly endorses these observations.

In the next canto 5, in its verse nos.11-23, we come across an incident when sage Vamdeo advises grieving citizens that Ram and Sita are not an ordinary couple; he says that Ram is Vishnu personified, while Sita is 'Yog Maya', the stupendous and profound cosmic energy of creation that can be harnessed by the fusion of Yoga and the natural mystical powers that are inherent but lying unharnessed and latent in all the creatures because all creatures are basically spiritual by nature. When the profound powers of Yoga are laced by the maverick

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tricks played by Maya, those who posses the resultant authority and astounding powers become endowed with such potentials that they can achieve supernatural feat. At the cosmic level, when that Yogmaya joined hands with the Viraat Purush, the latter was able to first unravel and then control the vast spectrum of the cosmos.

But coming back to the story, we see that by leading Ram from the front, Sita wishes to signal to him that she is more than willing to share his problems most happily, and he need not be in a dilemma.]

तामाह राघवः प्रीतः स्वप्रियां प्रियवादिनीम्। कथं वनं त्वां नेष्येऽहं बहुव्याघ्रमृगाकुलम्।। 64।।
राक्षसा घोररूपाश्च सन्ति मानुषभोजिनः। सिंहव्याघ्रवराहाश्च सञ्चरन्ति समन्ततः।। 65।।

tāmāha rāghavaḥ prītaḥ svapriyāṃ priyavādinīm /
kathaṃ vanaṃ tvāṃ neṣye'haṃ bahuvyāghramṛgākulam //
rākṣasā ghorarūpāśca santi mānuṣabhojinaḥ /
siṁhavyāghravarāhāśca sañcaranti samantataḥ //

Pleased with her response, Raghav (Sri Ram) then affectionately said to his beloved, soft spoken wife Janki (Sita), 'How can I take you along with me to a forest full of tigers and other wild animals (64). There, ferocious demons live who eat humans, while cruel and wild animals such as lion, tiger and boar roam about freely everywhere (65).

कट्वम्लफलमूलानि भोजनार्थं सुमध्यमे। अपूपानि व्यञ्जनानि विद्यन्ते न कदाचन।। 66।।
काले काले फलं वापि विद्यते कुत्र सुन्दरि। मार्गो न दृश्यते क्वापि शर्कराकण्टकान्वितः।।67।।

kaṭvamlaphalamūlāni bhojanārthaṃ sumadhyame /
apūpānapi vyañjanāni vidyante na kadācana //
kāle kāle phalaṃ vāpi vidyate kutra sundari /
mārgo na dṛśyate kvāpi śarkarākaṇṭakānvitaḥ //

Oh the one with a beautiful waist! For food, one gets only bitter and sour fruits and tasteless edible roots. Delicious eatables are never available there (66). Oh the beautiful one! Those fruits are also always not available, they are found only occasionally. In that forest, the path is sometimes not visible (i.e. it is obscured) because it is covered by dust and thorns (67).

गुहागह्वरसम्बाधं झिल्लीदंशादिभिर्युतम्। एवं बहुविधं दोषं वनं दण्डकसंज्ञितम्।। 68।।
पादचारेण गन्तव्यं शीतवातातपादिमत्। राक्षसादीन्वने दृष्ट्वा जीवितं ह्यस्यसेऽचिरात्।।69।।

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guhāgahvarasambādhaṃ jhillīdaṁśādibhiryutam /
evaṃ bahuvidhaṃ doṣaṃ vanaṃ daṇḍakasaṁjñitam //
pādacāreṇa gantavyaṃ śītavātātapādimat /
rākṣasādīnvane dṛṣṭvā jīvitaṃ hāsyase'cirāt //

That Dandakaranya forest is full of such numerous faults (or inconveniences and shortcomings). Besides the above, it has numerous caves and holes in the ground (as well as pits, trenches and grooves, deep furrows and high ridges, canyons and valleys, crags and gorges, wide chasms and undulating hills as well as pointed mountains etc.); it is replete with cobwebs and spike-like thorns and prickles (68). In such a forest, one has to walk on foot even during cold, wind and heat. I fear that you will die (of shock) on merely seeing the fierce and horrifying image of demons and other ferocious creatures that abound in the forest (69).

तस्माद्भद्रे गृहे तिष्ठ शीघ्रं द्रक्ष्यसि मां पुनः। रामस्य वचनं श्रुत्वा सीता दुःखसमन्विता ।। 70 ।।
प्रत्युवाच स्फुरद्वक्त्रा किञ्चित्कोपसमन्विता। कथं मामिच्छसे त्यक्तुं धर्मपत्नीं प्रतिव्रताम् ।। 71 ।।

tasmādbhadre gṛhe tiṣṭha śīghraṃ drakṣyasi māṃ punaḥ /
rāmasya vacanaṃ śrutvā sītā duḥkhasamanvitā //
pratyuvāca sphuradvaktrā kiñcitkopasamanvitā /
kathaṃ māmicchase tyaktuṃ dharmapatnīṃ pativratām //

Therefore, oh gentle lady, you should stay at home; you shall see me again very soon'. Hearing these words of Sri Ram, Sita became distraught, agitated and overwhelmed with sorrows (70). Her answer had a tinge of anger apparent in it when she retorted, with a slight emotional quiver to her lips—'Why do you want to leave this loyal and chaste wife of yours at home? (71).

त्वदनन्यामदोषां मां धर्मज्ञोऽसि दयापरः। त्वत्समीपे स्थितां राम को वा मां धर्षयेद्वने ।। 72 ।।
फलमूलादिकं यद्यत्तव भुक्तावशेषितम्। तदेवामृततुल्यं मे तेन तुष्टा रमाम्यहम् ।। 73 ।।
त्वया सह चरन्त्या मे कुशाः काशाश्च कण्टकाः। पुष्पास्तरणतुल्या मे भविष्यन्ति न संशयः ।।74 ।।

tvadananyāmadoṣāṃ māṃ dharmajño'si dayāparaḥ /
tvatsamīpe sthitāṃ rāma ko vā māṃ dharṣayedvane //
phalamūlādikaṃ yadyattava bhuktāvaśeṣitam /
tadevāmṛtatulyaṃ me tena tuṣṭā ramāmyaham //
tvayā saha carantyā me kuśāḥ kāśāśca kaṇṭakāḥ /
puṣpāstaraṇatulyā me bhaviṣyanti na saṁśayaḥ //

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You are an expert in Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct, ethics and morality), and are most merciful and compassionate. Why then do you wish to abandon your ardent devotee (follower) who is a loyal and chaste (faultless) wife, and who is without any stain or blemish? Oh Sri Ram! Even in the forest, who can do any harm to me while you are with me? (72). What ever fruits and edible roots will be left over after you've had them, shall be like Amrit (nectar, sweet, tasty) for me. I shall be contented by them and live happily (i.e. I shall never complain) (73). While roaming with you, even the grass blades, reeds and thorns etc. shall be like a bed of flowers for me—there is no doubt about it (74).

अहं त्वा क्लेशये नैव भवेयं कार्यसाधिनी। बाल्ये मां वीक्ष्य कश्चिद्वै ज्योतिःशास्त्रविशारदः।। 75।।
प्राह ते विपिने वासः पत्या सह भविष्यति। सत्यवादी द्विजो भूयादहमिष्यामि त्वया सह।।76।।

ahaṃ tvāṃ kleśaye naiva bhaveyaṃ kāryasādhinī /
bālye māṃ vīkṣya kaścidvai jyotiḥśāstraviśāradaḥ //
prāha te vipine vāsaḥ patyā saha bhaviṣyati /
satyavādī dvijo bhūyādgamiṣyāmi tvayā saha //

I shall not give you any trouble of any kind. On the contrary, I shall be helpful in your endeavours/works. During my childhood days, an expert astrologer had prophesised that I shall live with my husband in the forest. Let those words of that Brahmin become truthful—I shall surely accompany you to the forest (75-76).

अन्यत्किञ्चित्प्रवक्ष्यामि श्रुत्वा मां नय काननम्। रामायणानि बहुशः श्रुतानि बहुभिर्द्विजैः।। 77।।
सीतां विना वनं रामो गतः किं कुत्रचिद्वद। अतस्त्वया गमिष्यामि सर्वथा त्वत्सहायिनी।।78।।

anyatkiñcitpravakṣyāmi śrutvā māṃ naya kānanam /
rāmāyaṇāni bahuśaḥ śrutāni bahubhirdvijaiḥ //
sītāṃ vinā vanaṃ rāmo gataḥ kiṃ kutracidvada /
atastvayā gamiṣyāmi sarvathā tvatsahāyinī //

There is one more thing I tell you—on hearing it, you would take me to the forest. You must have heard many Ramayans from the mouth of many learned Brahmins (77). Tell me, has Sri Ram gone to the forest without Sita in any of these versions of the Ramayana? Hence, I shall truly be your helper and companion, and will surely go alongside you to the forest (78).

[Note—This verse shows and endorses the view that there are numerous

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versions of the divine story, and they indicate that each time the Lord has had to take the trouble of paying visit to this earth to subdue the evil forces and help the righteous ones.]

यदि गच्छसि मां त्यक्त्वा प्राणांस्त्यक्ष्यामि तेऽग्रतः। इति तं निश्चयं ज्ञात्वा सीताया रघुनन्दनः।। 79।।
अब्रवीद्देवि गच्छ त्वं वनं शीघ्रं मया सह। अरुन्धत्यै प्रयच्छाशु हारानाभरणानि च।। 80।।

yadigacchasi maṃ tyaktvā prāṇāṁstyakṣyāmi te'grataḥ /
iti taṃ niścayaṃ jñātvā sītāyā raghunandanaḥ //
abravīddevi gaccha tvaṃ vanaṃ śīghraṃ mayā saha /
arundhatyai prayacchāśu hārānābharaṇāni ca //

If you go alone by abandoning me, then I shall leave my life (i.e. die; commit suicide) immediately in front of you'. Seeing such a firm determination of Sita, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) said, 'Oh Devi! Come along with me to the forest with haste; give these necklaces and other priceless ornaments to sage Vashistha's wife Arundhati (79-80).

ब्राह्मणेभ्यो धनं सर्वं दत्त्वा गच्छमहे वनम्। इत्युक्त्वा लक्ष्मणेनाशु द्विजानाहूय भक्तितः।। 81।।
ददौ गवां वृन्दशतं धनानि वस्त्राणि दिव्यानि विभूषणानि।
कुटुम्बवद्भ्यः श्रुतशीलबद्ध्यो मुदा द्विजेभ्यो रघुवंशकेतुः।। 82।।

brāhmaṇebhyo dhanaṃ sarvaṃ dattvā gacchāmahe vanam /
ityuktvā lakṣmaṇenāśu dvijānāhūya bhaktitaḥ //
dadau gavāṃ vṛndaśataṃ dhanāni vastrāṇi divyāni vibhūṣaṇāni /
kuṭumbavadbhyaḥ śrutaśīlavadbhyo mudā dvijebhyo raghuvaṁśaketuḥ //

We shall donate all our wealth to Brahmins and then go to the forest'. Saying so, he asked Laxman to call all the Brahmins there (81). Raghukulketu (literally, a shining star in Raghu's clan; Sri Ram) gladly donated hundreds of cows, a lot of wealth, magnificent clothes, garments and ornaments to virtuous and expert Brahmins along with their relatives and kin (82).

अरुन्धत्यै ददौ सीता मुख्यान्याभरणानि च। रामो मातुः सेवकेभ्यो ददौ धनमनेकधा।। 83।।
स्वकान्तःपुरवासिभ्यः सेवकेभ्यस्तथैव च। पौरजानपदेभ्यश्च ब्राह्मणेभ्यः सहस्रशः।। 84।।

arundhatyai dadau sītā mukhyānyābharaṇāni ca /
rāmo mātuḥ sevakebhyo dadau dhanamanekadhā //
svakāntaḥpuravāsibhyaḥ sevakebhyastathaiva ca /
paurajānapadebhyaśca brāhmaṇebhyaḥ sahasraśaḥ //

Sita gave away her main ornaments to Arundhati, while Sri Ram

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gave away a lot of wealth to the servants serving his mother (83). Similarly, he distributed a lot of alms to the servants of the royal household, denizens of the city, subjects of the realm and Brahmins (84).

[Note :—All of them had assembled to attend the anointment ceremony. Further, one feels that they should not have accepted Sri Ram and Sita's personal belongings, for the sight of those things would have torn their hearts asunder. But perhaps they accepted them as a fond memorabilia of their beloved Ram and Sita, which they would cherish during the long fourteen years of wait. These personal items of their use would keep their memory alive in the hearts of the people who had no role in his banishment to the forest very much against their wills, and they can worship these items in honour and memory of their beloved Lord. They would have to live out the exile period whether they liked it or not, but these things would be like boats for them to tide over the agony and grief of separation. Certainly it was this factor, and not the desire to grab whatever wealth and treasure came their way, which motivated them. Further, it was a subtle signal from Sri Ram to Kaikeyi that her wishes would be carried out in letter and spirit, for he had no intention of coming back, so she needn't worry about the future security of her son Bharat as the king. Surely, he would not come back to claim the throne from him. This is the probable reason why Bharat decided to go and try to persuade Ram to come back, for he thought that even in the case the Lord did not come back immediately, at least he would not regard Bharat as an accomplice in this conspiracy, and he would surely come back after the fourteen years period was over.]

लक्ष्मणोऽपि सुमित्रां तु कौसल्यायै समर्पयत्। धनुष्पाणिः समागत्य रामस्याग्रे व्यवस्थितः ।। 85 ।।
रामः सीता लक्ष्मणश्च जग्मुः सर्वे नृपालयम्।। 86 ।।

lakṣmaṇo'pi sumitrāṃ tu kausalyāyai samarpayat /
dhanuṣpāṇiḥ samāgatya rāmasyāgre vyavasthitaḥ //
rāmaḥ sītā lakṣmaṇaśca jagmuḥ sarve nṛpālayam //

On the other hand, Laxman put his mother Sumitra in the care of Kaushalya, took his bow in his hand and stood before Sri Ram (85). After that, Sri Ram, Sita and Laxman went to the king together (86).

श्रीरामः सह सीतया नृपपथे गच्छन् शनैः सानुजः
पौरान् जानपदान्कुतूहलदृशः सानन्दमुद्वीक्षयन्।
श्यामः कामसहस्त्रसुन्दरवपुः कान्त्या दिशो भासयन्
पादन्यासपवित्रिताखिलजगत् प्रापालयं तत्पितुः ।।87 ।।

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śrīrāmaḥ saha sītayā nṛpapathe gacchan śanaiḥ sānujaḥ
paurān jānapadānkutūhaladṛśaḥ sānandamudvīkṣayan /
śyāmaḥ kāmasahasrasundaravapuḥ kāntyā diśo bhāsayan
pādanyāsapavitritākhilajagat prāpālayaṃ tatpituḥ //

Sri Ram—who was dark complexioned and as beauteous as thousands of Kamdeo-cupids taken together—accompanied by Sita and younger brother Laxman, wend his way slowly on the central avenue of the city, illuminating all the ten directions with his divine splendour and brilliant radiance, even as the citizens and subjects of the kingdom watched him eagerly and anxiously, with affectionate curiosity and wonder, while he purified the whole world (i.e. earth) by the touch of his holy feet as he walked on his way to the palace of his father (87).

***

Ayodhya Kand — Canto 5

Sri Ram's forest exile—Departure.

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

आयान्तं नागरा दृष्ट्वा मार्गे रामं सजानकिम्। लक्ष्मणेन समं वीक्ष्य ऊचुः सर्वे परस्परम्।।1।।
कैकेय्या वरदानादि श्रुत्वा दुःखसमावृताः। बत राजा दशरथः सत्यसन्धं प्रियं सुतम्।।2।।
स्त्रीहेतोरत्यजत्कामी तस्य सत्यात्मता कुतः। कैकेयी वा कथं दुष्टा रामं सत्यं प्रियङ्करम्।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

āyāntaṃ nāgarā dṛṣṭvā mārge rāmaṃ sajānakīm /
lakṣmaṇena samaṃ vīkṣya ūcuḥ sarve parasparam //
kaikeyyā varadānādi śrutvā duḥkhasamāvṛtāḥ /
bata rājā daśarathaḥ satyasandhaṃ priyaṃ sutam //
strīhetoratyajatkāmī tasya satyātmatā kutaḥ /
kaikeyī vā kathaṃ duṣṭā rāmaṃ satyaṃ priyaṅkaram //

Lord Shiva said to Parvati—'Watching Sri Ram coming down the road along with Janki (Sita) and Laxman, and having heard about the episode of Kaikeyi's boons, all the denizens of the city became extremely exasperated, peeved, sorrowful and agitated. They said to each other (1), 'Alas! King Dashrath is so enamoured by a woman and

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is under the spell of lust that he has even abandoned his most dear, most fond and truthfully righteous son (Sri Ram). How can he (Dashrath) be called righteous and truthful? And that wicked Kaikeyi—how come she gave forest exile to Sri Ram who is most truthful and affectionately benevolent towards all? (2-3).

विवासयामास कथं क्रूरकर्मातिमूढधीः। हे जना नात्र वस्तव्यं गच्छामोऽद्यैव काननम्।।4।।
यत्र रामः सभार्यश्च सानुजो गन्तुमिच्छति। पश्यन्तु जानकीं सर्वे पादचारेण गच्छतीम्।।5।।

vivāsayāmāsa kathaṃ krūrakarmātimūḍhadhīḥ /
he janā nātra vastavyaṃ gacchamo'dyaiva kānanam //
yatra rāmaḥ sabhāryaśca sānujo gantumicchati /
paśyantu jānakīṃ sarve pādacāreṇa gacchatīm //

Why has she become so selfish, cruel, pervert and mentally depraved? Oh companions! We must not stay here any longer; rather, we shall also go to the forest today where Sri Ram wishes to go with his wife and younger brother. Just have a look—Sita is walking on foot today! (4-5).

पुंभिः कदाचिद्दृष्ट्वा वा जानकी लोकसुन्दरी। सापि पादेन गच्छन्ती जनसङ्घेष्वनावृता।।6।।
रामोऽपि पादचारेण गजाश्वादिविवर्जितः। गच्छति द्रक्ष्यथ विभुं सर्वलोकैकसुन्दरम्।।7।।
राक्षसी कैकेयीनाम्नी जाता सर्वविनाशिनी। रामस्यापि भवेद्दुःखं सीतायाः पादयानतः।।8।।

puṃbhiḥ kadācidddṛṣṭvā vā jānakī lokasundarī /
sāpi pādena gacchantī janasaṅgheṣvanāvṛtā //
rāmo'pi pādacāreṇa gajāśvādivivarjitaḥ /
gacchati drakṣyatha vibhuṃ sarvalokaikasundaram //
rākṣasī kaikeyīnāmnī jātā sarvavināśinī /
rāmasyāpi bhaveddukhkhaṃ sītāyāḥ pādayānataḥ //

Alas! That Janki (Sita)—who is the most beautiful in the three Lokas (i.e. in the entire world) and who was rarely, if ever, seen by an outside male (who is not related to her) earlier—is walking in front of the crowd without any veil on her face (6). Look at Sri Ram too, who is the most charming, handsome and beautiful in all the worlds. He is also walking on foot today without any accompanying royal paraphernalia, such as horses and elephants (7). This Kaikeyi is a demoness in disguise who has taken birth to destroy (kill) all of us. Brothers! Even Sri Ram must be feeling greatly distressed, sorrowful and anguished by seeing Sita walk on foot (on the road, in front of the

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crowd, against all norms of royal etiquette, and forced to do so by destiny) (8).

बलवान्विधिरेवात्र पुंप्रयत्नो हि दुर्बलः। इति दुःखाकुले वृन्दे साधूनां मुनिपुङ्गवः।।9।।
अब्रवीद्वामदेवोऽथ साधूनां सङ्घमध्यगः। मानुशोचथ रामं वा सीतां वा वच्मि तत्त्वतः।।10।।

balavānvidhirevātra puṃprayatno hi durbalaḥ /
iti duḥkhākule vṛnde sādhūnāṃ munipuṅgavaḥ //
abravīdvāmadevo'tha sādhūnāṃ saṅghamadhyagaḥ /
mānuśocatha rāmaṃ vā sītāṃ vā vacmi tattvataḥ //

But what can be done? In this happening, we are helpless because destiny is very powerful and cruel; a man's efforts are totally ineffectual or in vain against it'. Seeing the community of 'Sadhus' (saintly, wise, noble-hearted, pious, righteous people) in such mental dilemma, agony and distress, and feeling very agitated, sage Vamdeo (i.e. Lord Shiva; or a sage of Vedic period with the same name who is said to be an incarnate of Shiva) came to them and consoled them—'I shall make you aware of the reality. You should not worry about Sri Ram and Sita (9-10).

एष रामः परो विष्णुरादिनारायणः स्मृतः। एषा सा जानकी लक्ष्मीर्योगमायेति विश्रुता।।11।।
असौ शेषस्तमन्वेति लक्ष्मणाख्यश्च साम्प्रतम्। एष मायागुणैर्युक्तस्तत्तदाकारवानिव।।12।।

eṣa rāmaḥ paro viṣṇurādināārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ /
eṣā sā jānakī lakṣmīryogamāyeti viśrutā //
asau śeṣastamanveti lakṣmaṇākhyaśca sāmpratam /
eṣa māyāguṇairyuktastattadākāravāniva //

This 'Ram' is not an ordinary person but the ancient Lord Vishnu, and this Janki (Sita) is Laxmi who is famed as the 'Yog Maya'[1] (11). Presently, the one who follows him in the person of Laxman is non other than the legendary Sheshnath[2]. The supreme cosmic Soul of creation (i.e. Brahm as Lord Ram), accompanied by his deluding and magical powers called Maya (revealed as Sita), appears to have various forms having different attributes (but this is simply an illusion created by this Maya) (12).

[Note—[1]Maya is the supreme power of delusion created by the supreme Brahm as part of his maverick creation. This Maya is also one of the various forms of the supreme cosmic infinite creative, sustaining and destructive energy of the Lord which can be harnessed by the meditative process

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called Yoga—hence, called Yog Maya. This energy force, in conjunction with the Viraat Purush, had created and takes care of the vast canvas of the cosmos. The word 'Yog' means union and fusion also, besides it's generally meaning of meditation. In fact, meditation also endeavours to establish a union between the various subtle forces of nature by bringing about harmony between them. So Yog Maya symbolises a union between the 'real' represented by Brahm, and the 'unreal' represented by delusions of this creation. This is perhaps the greatest paradox of creation—that both the real and the unreal co-exist! See also a detailed note on Yog Maya in Baal Kand, Canto 2, verse no.28, as well as Appendix 2 of this book which describes the concept in detail.

[2] Sheshnath is the mystical colossus celestial serpent who is said to hold the earth on its hood, and on the coiled body of whom Lord Vishnu reclines in the celestial ocean of milk called the Kshirsagar].

एष एव रजोयुक्तो ब्रह्माभूद्विश्वभावनः। सत्त्वाविष्टस्तथा विष्णुस्त्रिजगत्प्रतिपालकः।।13।।
एष रुद्रस्तामसोऽन्ते जगत्प्रलयकारणम्। एष मत्स्यः पुरा भूत्वा भक्तं वैवस्वतं मनुम्।।14।।
नाव्यारोप्य लयस्यान्ते पालयामास राघवः। समुद्रमथने पूर्वं मन्दरे सुतलं गते।।15।।

eṣa eva rajoyukto brahmābhūdviśvabhāvanaḥ /
sattvāviṣṭastathā viṣṇustrijagatpratipālakaḥ //
eṣa rudrastāmaso'nte jagatpralayakāraṇam /
eṣa matsyaḥ purā bhūtvā bhaktaṃ vaivasvataṃ manum //
nāvyāropya layasyānte pālayāmāsa rāghavaḥ /
samudramathane pūrvaṃ mandare sutalaṃ gate //

Endowed with the (second) quality of 'Raj' (the desire to produce and enjoy), he has become the creator Brahma, while being richer in the (first) quality of 'Sat' (i.e. truth, compassion, detachment, equanimity) he is Lord Vishnu who is the protector and sustainer of the three worlds (the celestial, terrestrial and subterranean) (13). At the end of a 'Kalpa' (a mythological long period of time; one day of Brahma which is equivalent to 4320×10^7 years), he takes the help of the (third, base) quality of 'Tam' (ignorance, darkness, gloom, evil tendencies, perversions, turpitude) and annihilates the world in the form of Rudra (a form of Shiva). In an earlier time, this same person Raghav (Sri Ram) had taken the form of a large fish and had saved his devotee Vaivaswat Manu from drowning at the time of the dooms-day deluge. At the time of the legendary churning of the ocean, when Mt. Mandrachal had begun sinking to the nether world (14-15)—

[Note :—See also Ayodhya Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 11-12.]

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अधारयत्स्वपृष्ठेऽदिं कूर्मरूपी रघूत्तमः। मही रसातलं याता प्रलये सूकरोऽभवत्।। 16।।
तोलयामास दंष्ट्राग्रे तां क्षोणीं रघुनन्दनः। नारसिंहं वपुः कृत्वा प्रह्लादवरदः पुरा।। 17।।
त्रैलोक्यकण्टकं रक्षः पाटयामास तन्नखैः। पुत्रराज्यं हृतं दृष्ट्वा ह्यदित्या याचितः पुरा।। 18।।

adhārayatsvapṛṣṭhe'driṃ kūrmarūpī raghūttamaḥ /
mahī rasātalaṃ yātā pralaye sūkaro'bhavat //
tolayāmāsa daṁṣṭrāgre tāṃ kṣoṇīṃ raghunandanaḥ /
nārasiṁhaṃ vapuḥ kṛtvā prahlādavaradaḥ purā //
trailokyakaṇṭakaṃ rakṣaḥ pāṭayāmāsa tannakhaiḥ /
putrarājyaṃ hṛtaṃ dṛṣṭvā hyadityā yācitaḥ purā //

It was then that the best one in the Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) had assumed the form of a tortoise and had borne it on his back. During the period of the great deluge when the earth had been submerged, he became the boar (16) and salvaged the earth on its snout. Similarly, he had assumed the form of a half-man half-lion (Narsingh) to give a boon to (or to bless, protect) his devotee Prahalad (who was being tormented by his demon father for worshipping Vishnu) (17) and had torn the entrails out of his father Hiranyakashipu—who was a thorn-like demon for the 3 worlds—with his nails. Once, when the God's mother Aditi prayed to him on seeing that her son Indra was being deprived of his kingdom (18)—

वामनत्वमुपागम्य याच्ञया चाहरत्पुनः। दुष्टक्षत्रियभूभारनिवृत्त्यै भार्गवोऽभवत्।। 19।।
स एव जगतां नाथ इदानीं रामतां गतः। रावणादीनि रक्षांसि कोटिशो निहनिष्यति।। 20।।

vāmanatvamupāgamya yācñayā cāharatpunaḥ /
duṣṭakṣatriyabhūbhāranivṛttyai bhārgavo'bhavat //
sa eva jagatāṃ nātha idānīṃ rāmatāṃ gataḥ /
rāvaṇādīni rakṣāṁsi koṭiśo nihaniṣyati //

At that time, he had assumed the form of the dwarf mendicant Vaaman and had begged (from king Baali) to retrieve the kingdom for him (Indra). In order to destroy the tyrannical Kshatriya kings, he became sage Brighu's son Parashuram (19). The same Lord of the universe has appeared in the form of Sri Ram now. He shall slay Ravana and crores (millions) of other demons (20).

मानुषेणैव मरणं तस्य दृष्टं दुरात्मनः। राज्ञा दशरथेनापि तपसाराधितो हरिः।। 21।।
पुत्रत्वाकाङ्क्षया विष्णोस्तदा पुत्रोऽभवद्धरिः। स एव विष्णुः श्रीरामो रावणादिवधाय हि।। 22।।

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गन्ताद्यैव वनं रामो लक्ष्मणेन सहायवान्। एषा सीता हरेर्माया सृष्टिस्थित्यन्तकारिणी।।23।।

mānuṣeṇaiva maraṇaṃ tasya dṛṣṭaṃ durātmanaḥ /
rājñā daśarathenāpi tapasārādhito hariḥ //
putratvākāṅkṣayā viṣṇostadā putro'bhavaddhariḥ /
sa eva viṣṇuḥ śrīrāmo rāvaṇādivadhāya hi //
gantādyaiva vanaṃ rāmo lakṣmaṇena sahāyavān /
eṣā sītā harermāyā sṛṣṭisthityantakāriṇī //

The evil soul's (Ravana) death is destined at the hands of a human being. King Dashrath, in his previous life, had propitiated Lord Vishnu with severe austerities and penances so that he takes birth in the former's household. That is why the Lord has taken birth as his son. That Lord Vishnu is Sri Ram now. There is no doubt about it (21-22). Now he shall proceed to the forest along with Laxman to kill Ravana. This Sita is the personification of the Lord's Maya (delusion creating powers) which creates, sustains and annihilates the world (23).

राजा व कैकेयी वापि नात्र कारणमण्वपि। पूर्वेद्युर्नारदः प्राह भूभारहरणाय च।।24।।
रामोऽप्याह स्वयं साक्षाच्छ्वो गमिष्याम्यहं वनम्।
अतो रामं समुद्दिश्य चिन्तां त्यजत बालिशाः।।25।।
रामरामेति ये नित्यं जपन्ति मनुजा भुवि। तेषां मृत्युभयादीनि न भवन्ति कदाचन।।26।।

rājā vā kaikeyī vāpi nātra kāraṇamaṇvapi /
pūrvedyurnāradaḥ prāha bhūbhāraharaṇāya ca //
rāmo'pyāha svayaṃ sākṣācchvo gamiṣyāmyahaṃ vanam /
ato rāmaṃ samuddiśya cintāṃ tyajata bāliśāḥ //
rāmarāmeti ye nityaṃ japanti manujā bhuvi /
teṣāṃ mṛtyu bhayādīni na bhavanti kadācana //

The king or Kaikeyi are not in the least the cause of his exile. It was only yesterday that sage Narad had pleaded with him (Sri Ram) to remove the burden of the earth (by killing the demons) (24). At that time, Sri Ram had assured him himself that he would go to the forest the next day. Hence, all of you should not worry for him (25). In this world, those people who constantly chant 'Ram, Ram' do not have any fear of death etc. of any kind (26).

[Note :—See Ayodhya Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 32-39 also.]

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का पुनस्तस्य रामस्य दुःखशङ्का महात्मनः। रामनाम्नैव मुक्तिः स्यात्कलौ नान्येन केनचित्।। 27।।
मायामानुषरूपेण विडम्बयति लोककृत्। भक्तानां भजनार्थाय रावणस्य वधाय च।। 28।।
राज्ञश्चाभीष्टसिद्ध्यर्थं मानुषं वपुराश्रितः। इत्युक्त्वा विररामाथ वामदेवो महामुनिः।।29।।

kā punastasya rāmasya duḥkhaśaṅkā mahātmanaḥ /
rāmanāmnaiva muktiḥ syātkalau nānyena kenacit //
māyāmānuṣarūpeṇa viḍambayati lokakṛt /
bhaktānāṃ bhajanārthāya rāvaṇasya vadhāya ca //
rājñaścābhīṣṭasiddhyarthaṃ mānuṣaṃ vapurāśritaḥ /
ityuktvā virarāmātha vāmadevo māhāmuniḥ //

Then, how can one ever have any doubt that the great Sri Ram himself will suffer from sorrows in any manner whatsoever? During the era of Kali (the present era), one can attain emancipation and salvation merely on the strength of Sri Ram's holy name, and by no other means (27). The Lord, who is the cause of the universe, is playing sport in this world in the disguise of a human being to provide his devotees the benefit of enjoying and singing the praises of his visible form having a set of noble, divine and holy characters, attributes and virtues, as well as with the purpose of slaying the evil Ravana (28). Besides this, he has assumed this human form to fulfill the wishes of the king (Dashrath)'. Having said this, sage Vamdeo fell silent (29).

श्रुत्वा तेऽपि द्विजाः सर्वे रामं ज्ञात्वा हरिं विभुम्। जहुर्हृत्संशयग्रन्थिं राममेवान्वचिन्तयन्।। 30।।
य इदं चिन्तयेन्नित्यं रहस्यं रामसीतयोः। तस्य रामे दृढा भक्तिर्भवेद्विज्ञानपूर्विका।। 31।।
रहस्यं गोपनीयं वो यूयं वै राघवप्रियाः। इत्युक्त्वा प्रययौ विप्रस्तेऽपि रामं परं विदुः।।32।।

śrutvā te'pi dvijāḥ sarve rāmaṃ jñātvā hariṃ vibhum /
jahurhṛtsaṁśayagranthiṃ rāmamevānvacintayan //
ya idaṃ cintayennityaṃ rahasyaṃ rāmasītayoḥ /
tasya rāme dṛḍhā bhaktirbhavedvijñānapūrvikā //
rahasyaṃ gopanīyaṃ vo yūyaṃ vai rāghavapriyāḥ /
ityuktvā prayayau vipraste'pi rāmaṃ paraṃ viduḥ //

Hearing this (sermon), all the assembled seniors and wise ones recognised Sri Ram as 'Vibhu Hari' (the all-pervading, almighty, omnipresent, omniscient and supreme Lord Vishnu). Thereafter, they left their doubts aside and started remembering Sri Ram, the Lord (30). 'Those persons who would regularly (daily, persistently, constantly and consistently) contemplate and reflect on this secret (i.e.

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the essential and esoteric truth) about the nature of Sri Ram, would have steadfast and robust (strong, firm, unwavering, steady) devotion and dedication for the Lord based on sound, logical reasoning (i.e. based on realisation of the real facts behind the facade) as well as wisdom steeped in knowledge of the truth and self awakening (31). All of you are most dear to Sri Ram (or conversely, Sri Ram is dear to you all). So, keep this fact always a secret'—saying this, sage Vamdeo departed from there, while the citizens also came to realise (or understand) that Sri Ram is no ordinary human being but is the supreme, macrocosmic soul called Parmatma (32).

[Note :—Vamdeo advised the people to keep it a secret lest the demons become aware of Sri Ram's true identity. Surely then they will not fight with him and would not be slayed at his hands. Also, Sri Ram would not be able to play/act his part to the full. The whole divine plan of eliminating the demons shall go haywire if the secret leaks.]

ततो रामः समाविश्य पितृगेहमवारितः। सानुजः सीतया गत्वा कैकेयीमिदमब्रवीत्।। 33।।
आगताः स्मो वयं मातस्त्रयस्ते सम्मतं वनम्। गन्तुं कृतधियः शीघ्रमाज्ञापयतु नः पिता।।34।।

tato rāmaḥ samāviśya pitṛgehamavāritaḥ /
sānujaḥ sītayā gatvā kaikeyīmidamabravīt //
āgatāḥ smo vayaṃ mātastrayaste sammataṃ vanam /
gantuṃ kṛtadhiyaḥ śīghramājñāpayatu naḥ pitā //

Meanwhile, Sri Ram entered the palace of his father along with Laxman and Sita, and said to Kaikeyi (33), 'Oh mother! As per your orders, we three have come prepared to proceed to the forest. Let the father gave us his permission (once again at the last moment)' (34).

इत्युक्ता सहसोत्थाय चीराणि प्रददौ स्वयम्। रामाय लक्ष्मणायाथ सीतायै च पृथक् पृथक्।। 35।।
रामस्तु वस्त्राण्युत्सृज्य वन्यचीराणि पर्यधात्। लक्ष्मणोऽपि तथा चक्रे सीता तन्न विजानती।।36।।
हस्ते गृहीत्वा रामस्य लज्जया मुखमैक्षत। रामो गृहीत्वा तच्चीरमंशुके पर्यवेष्टयत्।। 37।।

ityuktā sahasotthāya cīrāṇi pradadau svayam /
rāmāya lakṣmaṇāyātha sītāyai ca pṛthak pṛthak //
rāmastu vastrāṇyutsṛjya vanyacīrāṇi paryadhāt /
lakṣmaṇo'pi tathā cakre sītā tanna vijānatī //
haste gṛhītvā rāmasya lajjayā mukhamaikṣata /
rāmo gṛhītvā taccīramaṁśuke paryaveṣṭayat //

When the Sri Ram had said so, Kaikeyi got up herself and gave

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separate hermit-like robes and garments made of barks of trees to Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita (35). Then, Sri Ram gave up his royal robes and ornamental clothes and accepted those hermit-like clothes. Laxman too did the same. But Sita did not know how to wear them (36). She picked them up in her hands and hesitantly and shyly looked at Sri Ram. Then Sri Ram wrapped or draped that piece of cloth around her body over the normal clothes she had been wearing (37).

तद्दृष्ट्वा रुरुदुः सर्वे राजदाराः समन्ततः। वसिष्ठस्तु तदाकर्ण्य रुदितं भर्त्सयन् रुषा।। 38।।
कैकेयीं प्राह दुर्वृत्ते राम एव त्वया वृतः। वनवासाय दुष्टे त्वं सीतायै किं प्रयच्छसि।। 39।।

taddṛṣṭvā rurudaḥ sarve rājadārāḥ samantataḥ /
vasiṣṭhastu tadākarṇya ruditaṃ bhartsayan ruṣā //
kaikeyīṃ prāha durvṛtte rāma eva tvayā vṛtaḥ /
vanavāsāya duṣṭe tvaṃ sītāyai kiṃ prayacchasi //

Seeing this, all the womenfolk of the palace began weeping and lamenting woefully. Then sage Vashistha was very irked at the sight of all of them weeping bitterly, and unable to control his resentment, anger and revulsion any longer, he angrily chided Kaikeyi in stern words (38)— 'Oh you wicked and pervert one! You had asked for the boon of sending only Sri Ram to the forest. Why then (or how come and how dare) you give forest-like clothes to Sita? (39).

यदि रामं समन्वेति सीता भक्त्या पतिव्रता। दिव्याम्बरधरा नित्यं सर्वाभरणभूषिता।। 40।।
रमयत्वनिशं रामं वनदुःखनिवारिणी। राजा दशरथोऽप्याह सुमन्त्रं रथमानय।। 41।।

yadi rāmaṃ samanveti sītā bhaktyā pativratā /
divyāmbaradharā nityaṃ sarvābharaṇabhūṣitam //
ramayatvaniśaṃ rāmaṃ vanaduḥkhanivāriṇī /
rājā daśaratho'pyāha sumantraṃ rathamānaya //

If the loyal, chaste and devoted wife that Sita is wishes to follow her husband Sri Ram to the forest, then she must go with him fully decked up with all the ornaments and wearing all the magnificent clothes behooving her stature that she is already wearing at present (40). She should endeavour to minimise or reduce (or remove) Sri Ram's troubles in the forest, and make him feel happy and comfortable there as far as possible'. Then king Dashrath ordered Sumantra, 'Oh Sumantra! Bring the chariot (41).

[Note :—Sita had already disposed of all her jewelry on the orders of Sri

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Ram and had given them to sage Vashistha's wife Arundhati—see Canto 4, verse nos. 80-81 and 83. As for clothes, it is obvious from verse no. 37 of this Canto 5 that Sri Ram had wrapped the hermit-like overall on and around the Sari and other garments that Sita was already wearing. Hence, we conclude that Sita went to the forest with proper clothes on as befitting her stature as the daughter-in-law of the kingdom of Ayodhya, but without extravagant jewelry and costly ornaments. She was only wearing basic ornaments worn by a married woman, as directed by sage Vashistha in verse no. 40 above.]

रथमारुह्य गच्छन्तु वनं वनचरप्रियाः। इत्युक्त्वा राममालोक्य सीतां चैव सलक्ष्मणम्।। 42।।
दुःखान्निपतितो भूमौ रुरोदाश्रुपरिप्लुतः। आरुरोह रथं सीता शीघ्रं रामस्य पश्यतः।। 43।।

rathamāruhya gacchantu vanaṃ vanacarapriyāḥ /
ityuktvā rāmamālokya sītāṃ caiva salakṣmaṇam //
duḥkhānnipatito bhūmau rurodāśrupariplutaḥ /
āruroha rathaṃ sītā śīghraṃ rāmasya paśyataḥ //

These three, who are dear to those living in the forest, shall go there on a chariot'. Saying so, he (Dashrath) looked at Sri Ram along with Laxman and Sita. He was overcome with immense grief and remorse, and fell down on the floor and wept bitterly, with tears rolling down from his eyes in torrents. Then, even as Sri Ram watched, Sita hastily boarded the chariot (first, before Sri Ram and Laxman could do so) (42-43).

[Note :—It was Sita who first strode the chariot even as Sri Ram watched. Sita represented the cosmic 'Adi Shakti', the cosmic, supreme, infinite energy which had manifested or revealed from time to time in the form of Durga, Kali, Parvati etc. This seemingly innoxious incident has great symbolic significance—that the cosmic Shakti has taken the initiative to fulfill the work of the Gods, which was Ravan's death. Sri Ram was simply following her, not leading her! By boarding the chariot first, she indicated that she was in the lead and symbolically told Sri Ram not to hesitate or be reluctant any longer. See seemed to say—'I am in charge now'. See also canto 4, verse no.62-63 and canto 6, verse no.19 in this context.]

रामः प्रदक्षिणं कृत्वा पितरं रथमारुहत्। लक्ष्मणः खड्गयुगलं धनुस्तूणीयुगं तथा।। 44।।
गृहीत्वा रथमारुह्य नोदयामास सारथिम्। तिष्ठ तिष्ठ सुमन्त्रेति राजा दशरथोऽब्रवीत्।। 45।।

rāmaḥ pradakṣiṇaṃ kṛtvā pitaraṃ rathamāruhat /
lakṣmaṇaḥ khaḍgayugalaṃ dhanustūṇīyugaṃ tathā //
gṛhītvā rathamāruhya nodayāmāsa sārathim /
tiṣṭha tiṣṭha sumantreti rājā daśaratho'bravīt //

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Then Sri Ram circled (circumambulated) his father as a token of showing reverence and respect to him, and mounted the chariot. Behind him boarded Laxman armed with two bows, two swords and quivers. Then he asked the charioteer to start for the journey. King Dashrath interceded, calling out distressfully and in utter dismay—'Oh Sumantra! Stop, Stop!' (44-45).

[Note:—How contradictory, indeed! Verse nos. 41-42 tell us that Dashrath ordered Sumantra to bring the chariot, and now in verse no. 45 he attempts to stop him. This shows the great mental dilemma that was tearing him apart, throwing the old man in a tailspin of extreme mental and emotional uncertainties leading to extreme agony, tumult and upheaval. On the one hand were his vows and his reputation as being true to his words, and on the other hand was his love for his dearest son Sri Ram. This is a very heart rendering scene indeed—one is moved sufficiently enough to have empathy with Dashrath and have pity for him.]

गच्छ गच्छेति रामेण नोदितोऽचोदयद्रथम्। रामे दूरं गते राजा मूर्च्छितः प्रापतद्भुवि।। 46।।
पौरास्तु बालवृद्धाश्च वृद्धा ब्राह्मणसत्तमाः। तिष्ठ तिष्ठेति रामेति क्रोशन्तो रथमन्वयुः।।47।।

gaccha gaccheti rāmeṇa nodito'codayadratham /
rāme dūraṃ gate rājā mūrcchitaḥ prāpatadbhuvi //
paurāstu bālavṛddhāśca vṛddhā brāhmaṇasattamāḥ /
tiṣṭha tiṣṭheti rāmeti krośanto rathamanvayuḥ //

But Sri Ram cajoled him—'Move on, move on, and proceed hastily'. So Sumantra moved the chariot forward. When Sri Ram had gone some distance, the king fainted and fell on the ground (46). Thereafter, all the residents of the city—children, elderly and sages and seers—ran behind the chariot, wailing and shouting (in utter dismay and anguish of separation)—'Stop Ram! Do not go! Oh Ram, please stop!' (47).

राजा रुदित्वा सुचिरं मां नयन्तु गृहं प्रति। कौसल्याया राममातुरित्याह परिचारकान्।। 48।।
किञ्चित्कालं भवेत्तत्र जीवनं दुःखितस्य मे। अत ऊर्ध्वं न जीवामि चिरं रामं विना कृतः।।49।।
ततो गृहं प्रविश्यैव कौसल्यायाः पपात ह। मूर्च्छितश्च चिराद्बुद्धवा तूष्णीमेवावतस्थिवान्।।50।।

rājā ruditvā suciraṃ māṃ nayantu gṛhaṃ prati /
kausalyāyā rāmamāturityāha paricārakān //
kiñcitkālaṃ bhavettatra jīvanaṃ duḥkhitasya me /
ata ūrdhvaṃ na jīvāmi ciraṃ rāmaṃ vinā kṛtaḥ //
tato gṛhaṃ praviśyaiva kausalyāyāḥ papāta ha /
mūrcchitaśca cirādbuddhvā tūṣṇīmevāvatasthivān //

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The king went on weeping for a long time; then he instructed his attendants, 'Take me to the residence of Kaushalya, Sri Ram's mother (48). Staying there, this tormented soul of mine can find some solace and survive for some time, but I will not be able to live for long now without Sri Ram' (49). Then, as soon as he reached Kaushalya's place, the king fell unconscious on the ground. After that, when he regained consciousness after a long time, he sat quietly in a numbed daze (50).

रामस्तु तमसातीरं गत्वा तत्रावसत्सुखी। जलं प्राश्य निराहारो वृक्षमूलेऽस्वपद्विभुः।। 51।।
सीतया सह धर्मात्मा धनुष्पाणिस्तु लक्ष्मणः। पालयामास धर्मज्ञः सुमन्त्रेण समन्वितः।।52।।

rāmastu tamasātīraṃ gatvā tatrāvasatsukhī /
jalaṃ prāśya nirāhāro vṛkṣamūle'svapadvibhuḥ //
sītayā saha dharmātmā dhanuṣpāṇistu lakṣmaṇaḥ /
pālayāmāsa dharmajñaḥ sumantreṇa samanvitaḥ //

Here meanwhile, Sri Ram reached the banks of the river Tamsa and spent some time there comfortably. During the night, he did not eat anything but drank only water, and along with Sita, he slept under a tree, while Laxman, along with Sumantra, protected him, armed with a bow (by remaining vigilant throughout the night even as the Lord and Sita slept on the ground) (51-52).

पौराः सर्वे समागत्य स्थितास्तस्याविदूरतः। शक्ता रामं पुरं नेतुं नोचेद्गच्छामहे वनम्।। 53।।
इति निश्चयमाज्ञाय तेषां रामोऽतिविस्मितः। नाहं गच्छामि नगरमेते वे क्लेशभागिनः।।54।।
भविष्यन्तीति निश्चित्य सुमन्त्रमिदमब्रवीत्। इदानीमेव गच्छामः सुमन्त्र रथमानय।। 55।।

paurāḥ sarve samāgatya sthitāstasyāvidūrataḥ /
śaktā rāmaṃ puraṃ netuṃ nocedgacchāmahe vanam //
iti niścayamājñāya teṣāṃ rāmo'tivismitaḥ /
nāhaṃ gacchāmi nagaramete vai kleśabhāginaḥ //
bhaviṣyantīti niścitya sumantramidamabravīt /
idānīmeva gacchāmaḥ sumantra rathamānaya //

(The citizens who were following the chariot from behind, finally caught up, and—) All the citizens came there and stayed near them for the night. They were determined that either they would take Sri Ram back to Ayodhya or else they shall accompany him to the forest (53). When Sri Ram came to know about their determination, he was in a quandary and greatly perplexed. Deciding that since he will definitely not return to Ayodhya, and they (the citizens) would

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unnecessarily suffer in the forest (54), he called Sumantra aside and said, 'Oh Sumantra! Bring the chariot for me and we shall move ahead forthwith' (55).

[Note :—Sage Vamdeo had enlightened the wise ones about the true nature of Sri Ram in verse nos. 9-29 and so they were not the ones who had run behind the chariot to the forest. It was the ordinary folks, the simple and humble citizens who could not contain their sorrows and anguish of separation, who ran behind Sri Ram. This verse indicates the measure of love and attachment the subjects of Ayodhya had for their Lord.]

इत्याज्ञप्तः सुमन्त्रोऽपि रथं वाहैरयोजयत्। आरुह्य रामः सीता च लक्ष्मणोऽपि ययुर्द्रुतम्।। 56।।
अयोध्याभिमुखं गत्वा किञ्चिद्दूरं ततो ययुः। तेऽपि राममदृष्ट्वैव प्रातरुत्थाय दुःखिता।। 57।।
रथनेमिगतं मार्गं पश्यन्तस्ते पुरं ययुः। हृदि रामं ससीतं ते ध्यायन्तस्तस्थुरन्वहम्।। 58।।

ityājñaptaḥ sumantro'pi rathaṃ vāhairayojayat /
āruhya rāmaḥ sītā ca lakṣmaṇo'pi yayurdrutam //
ayodhyābhimukhaṃ gatvā kiñciddūraṃ tato yayuḥ /
te'pi rāmamadṛṣṭvaiva prātarutthāya duḥkhitāḥ //
rathanemigataṃ mārgaṃ paśyantaste puraṃ yayuḥ /
hṛdi rāmaṃ sasītaṃ te dhyāyantastathuranvaham //

Being thus instructed by Sri Ram, Sumantra yoked the horses to the chariot. Then Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita boarded it and swiftly moved on (56). They took the chariot towards Ayodhya for some distance and then turned towards the forest. When the subjects woke up the next morning and found Sri Ram missing from the place, they were extremely sad, remorseful, frustrated and exasperated (57). They followed the marks made by the wheels of the chariot and retraced their path back to Ayodhya (see verse no. 67). But at the crossroad, they lost its track. They spent their remaining days fondly remembering Sri Ram and Sita in their hearts (58).

[Note :—It is obvious that Sumantra drove back to an intersection near the city and then turned on a paved road leading away from the city, instead of soft ground, so that the marks of the chariot's wheels were not visible and the people would not know whether the chariot had turned right, or left, or had gone straight in the direction opposite the city. It was a clever ruse adopted by Sumantra to 'beat the track', as it were.]

सुमन्त्रोऽपि रथं शीघ्रं नोदयामास सादरम्। स्फीताञ्जनपादन्पश्यन् रामः सीतासमन्वितः।। 59।।
गङ्गातीरं समागच्छच्छृङ्गवेराविदूरतः। गङ्गां दृष्ट्वा नमस्कृत्य स्नात्वा सानन्दमानसः।। 60।।

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sumantro'pi rathaṃ śīghraṃ nodayāmāsa sādaram /
sphītāñjanapadānpaśyan rāmaḥ sītāsamanvitaḥ //
gaṅgātīraṃ samāgacchacchṛṅgaverāvidūrataḥ /
gaṅgāṃ dṛṣṭvā namaskṛtya snātvā sānandamānasaḥ //

Here, Sumantra swiftly moved his chariot forward with due respect as directed by Sri Ram (i.e. though he realised that he is literally deceiving the wailing and harried subjects who were eagerly and tearfully following them from behind, but he was morally bound by his duty to carry out the instructions issued to him by the Lord).Then Sri Ram saw the vast countryside of the realm and arrived at the banks of river Ganges at Sringverpur. Seeing the holy river, he happily bowed his head and bathed in it (59-60).

शिंशपावृक्षमूले स निषसाद रघूत्तमः। ततो गुहो जनैः श्रुत्वा रामागममहोत्सवम्।। 61।।
सखायं स्वामिनं द्रष्टुं हर्षात्तूर्णं समापतत्। फलानि मधुपुष्पादि गृहीत्वा भक्तिसंयुक्तः।।62।।
रामस्याग्रे विनिक्षिप्य दण्डवत्प्रापतद्भुवि। गुहमुत्थाप्य तं तूर्णं राघवः परिषस्वजे।। 63।।

śiṁśipāvṛkṣamūle sa niṣasāda raghūttamaḥ /
tato guho janaiḥ śrutvā rāmāgamamahotsavam //
sakhāyaṃ svāminaṃ draṣṭuṃ harṣāttūrṇaṃ samāpatat /
phalāni madhupuṣpādi gṛhītvā bhaktisaṁyutaḥ //
rāmasyāgre vinikṣipya daṇḍavatprāpatadbhuvi /
guhamutthāpya taṃ tūrṇaṃ rāghavaḥ pariṣasvaje //

Then Sri Ram, who was the best in Raghu's clan, sat down under the shade of the Sesam tree (a tree renowned for its timber). Around this time, Guha, the chieftain of the Nishad (boatman) community, heard the good news by word of mouth about the auspicious arrival of Sri Ram (61). As soon as he heard it, in order to meet his only friend and Lord (Sri Ram), he cheerfully collected fruits, honey and flowers etc. (as welcoming gifts) and went there to meet him (62). He put these gifts in front of Sri Ram and fell before him (prostrated) like a stick. Then Raghav (Sri Ram) immediately picked him up and embraced him affectionately (63).

संपृष्टकुशलो रामं गुहः प्राञ्जलिरब्रवीत्। धन्योऽहमद्य मे जन्म नैषादं लोकपावन।। 64।।
बभूव परमानन्दः स्पृष्ट्वा तेऽङ्गं रघूत्तम। नैषादराज्यमेतत्ते किङ्करस्य रघूत्तम।। 65।।
त्वदधीनं वसन्नत्र पालयास्मान् रघूद्वह। आगच्छ यामो नगरं पावनं कुरु मे गृहम्।। 66।।

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saṃpṛṣṭakuśalo rāmaṃ guhaṃ prāñjalirabravīt /
dhanyo'hamadya me janma naiṣādaṃ lokapāvana //
babhūva paramānadaḥ spṛṣṭvā te'ṅgaṃ raghūttama /
naiṣādarājyametatte kiṅkarasya raghūttama //
tvadadhīnaṃ vasannatra pālayāsmān raghūdvaha /
āgaccha yāmo nagaraṃ pāvanaṃ kuru me gṛham //

When Sri Ram asked about his well-beings, Guha replied with palms joined together in submission—'Oh 'Lokpaawan' (i.e. one who purifies the world)! I am privileged and feel honoured. My taking birth as a Nishad (boatman) has borne fruits and I feel fully rewarded (64). Oh the most exalted in Raghu's clan (Sri Ram)! I feel extremely glad and exhilarated by your physical presence. This kingdom (of the boatman community) belongs to you, so oh Sri Ram, you stay amongst us and protect us. Come, enter the city and purify (sanctify) my household (65-66).

गृहाण फलमूलानि त्वदर्थं सञ्चितानि मे। अनुगृह्णीष्व भगवन् दासस्तेऽहं सुरोत्तम।।67।।
रामस्तमाह सुप्रीतो वचनं शृणु मे सखे। न वेक्ष्यामि गृहं ग्रामं नव वर्षाणि पञ्च च।।68।।
दत्तमन्येन नो भुञ्जे फलमूलादि किञ्चन। राज्यं ममैतत्तं सर्वं त्वं सखा मेऽतिवल्लभः।।69।।

gṛhāṇa phalamūlāni tvadarthaṃ sañcitāni me /
anugṛhṇīṣva bhagavan dāsaste'haṃ surottama //
rāmastamāha suprīto vacanaṃ śṛṇu me sakhe /
na vekṣyāmi gṛhaṃ grāmaṃ nava varṣāṇi pañca ca //
dattamanyena no bhuñje phalamūlādi kiñcana /
rājyaṃ mamaitattaṃ sarvaṃ tvaṃ sakhā me'tivallabhaḥ //

Oh Lord! Please accept whatever fruits and edible roots that I have collected for you. Oh the most exalted amongst God! I am your humble servant (devotee, follower, subordinate, supplicant and a subject of your realm)! Show your munificence and benediction on me' (67). Sri Ram was very pleased and replied, 'Oh friend! Listen, I cannot go to a village or house for the next fourteen years (68), and neither can I eat fruits and edible roots offered by others. Oh friend, all of your kingdom is mine and you too are my most dear friend' (69).

वटक्षीरं समानाय्य जटामुकुटमादरात्। बबन्ध लक्ष्मणेनाथ सहितो रघुनन्दनः।।70।।
जलमात्रं तु सम्प्राश्य सीतया सह राघवः। आस्तृतं कुशपर्णाद्यैः शयनं लक्ष्मणेन हि।।71।।
उवास तत्र नगरप्रासादाग्रे यथा पुरा। सुष्वाप तत्र वैदेह्या पर्यङ्क इव संस्कृते।।72।।

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vaṭakṣīraṃ samānāyya jaṭāmukuṭamādarāt /
babandha lakṣmaṇenātha sahito raghunandanaḥ //
jalamātraṃ tu samprāśya sītayā saha rāghavaḥ /
āstṛtaṃ kuśaparṇādyaiḥ śayanaṃ lakṣmaṇena hi //
uvāsa tatra nagaraprāsādāgre yathā purā /
suṣvāpa tatra vaidehyā paryaṅka iva saṁskṛte //

After that, Sri Ram asked for milk (sap) of the Vat tree (Banyan; the Indian fig) and, along with Laxman, matted and tied his hairs properly. [The sticky sap of the banyan tree is used by hermits to tie the hair into a tress and then pile the tresses on the top of the head like a pyramid or a crown; meaning matted hairs.] (70). Laxman made a bed of grass and leaves, and Sri Ram accompanied by Sita, seated himself on it and slept on it like he used to do earlier on a bedstead back in his palace in Ayodhya (71-72).

ततोऽविदूरे परिगृह्य चापं सबाणतूणीरधनुः स लक्ष्मणः।
ररक्ष रामं परितो विपश्यन् गुहेन सार्धं सशरासनेन।। 73।।

tato'vidūre parigṛhya cāpaṃ sabāṇatūṇīradhanuḥ sa lakṣmaṇaḥ /
rarakṣa rāmaṃ parito vipaśyan guhena sārdhaṃ saśarāsanena //

Near him, Laxman—armed with a bow, arrow and a quiver, and accompanied by Guha who was also armed with a bow—sat vigilantly alert to protect Sri Ram while he slept (73).

[Note :—This is the 2nd night of exile.]

***

Ayodhya Kand — Canto 6

Laxman's gospel; Crossing of river Ganges; Meeting with sages Bharadwaj and Valmiki; Valmiki's gospel

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

सुप्तं रामं समालोक्य गुहः सोऽश्रुपरिप्लुतः। लक्ष्मणं प्राह विनयाद् भ्रातः पश्यसि राघवम्।।1।।
शयानं कुशपत्रौघसंस्तरे सीतया सह। यः शेते स्वर्णपर्यङ्के स्वास्तीर्णे भवनोत्तमे।।2।।
कैकेयी रामदुःखस्य कारणं विधिना कृता। मन्थराबुद्धिमास्थाय कैकेयी पापमाचरत्।।3।।

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śrīmahādeva uvāca

suptaṃ rāmaṃ samālokya guhaḥ so'śrupariplutaḥ /
lakṣmaṇaṃ prāha vinayād bhrātaḥ paśyasi rāghavam //
śayānaṃ kuśapatraughasaṁstare sītayā saha /
yaḥ śete svarṇaparyaṅke svāstīrṇe bhavanottame //
kaikeyī rāmaduḥkhasya kāraṇaṃ vidhinā kṛtā /
mantharābuddhimāsthāya kaikeyī pāpamācarat //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Seeing Sri Ram sleeping (on the ground in a humble condition), Guha's eyes were filled with tears (of pity, regrets, helplessness, gloom, sorrows and sympathy) and he said to Laxman politely, 'Oh brother! Are you watching? Raghav (Sri Ram), who used to recline on a golden bedstead on beautiful mattresses in his majestic palace, is sleeping along with Sita on the rough bed made up of grass and leaves on the ground (1-2). The creator has made Kaikeyi the cause of all this agony and distress to Sri Ram. She has greatly sinned (erred) by relying on the corrupted wisdom (and advise) of Manthra' (3).

तच्छ्रुत्वा लक्ष्मणः प्राह सखे शृणु वचो मम। कः कस्य हेतुर्दुःखस्य कश्च हेतुः सुखस्य वा ।।4।।
स्वपूर्वार्जितकर्मैव कारणं सुखदुःखयोः ।।5।।

tacchrutvā lakṣmaṇaḥ prāha sakhe śṛṇu vaco mama /
kaḥ kasya heturduḥkhasya kaśca hetuḥ sukhasya vā //
svapūrvārjitakarmaiva kāraṇaṃ sukhaduḥkhayoḥ //

Hearing this, Laxman said, 'Oh friend! Listen to me. Who is responsible for the sorrow, distress and agony of others? (That is, no one.) A man's past deeds is the only cause for his happiness and sorrows (4-5).

सुखस्य दुःखस्य न कोऽपि दाता परो ददातीति कुबुद्धिरेषा।
अहं करोमीति वृथाभिमानः स्वकर्मसूत्रग्रथितो हि लोकः ।।6।।
सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनद्वेष्यमध्यस्थबान्धवाः। स्वयमेवाचरन्कर्म तथा तत्र विभाव्यते ।।7।।

sukhasya duḥkhasya na ko'pi dātā paro dadātīti kubuddhireṣā /
ahaṃ karomīti vṛthābhimānaḥ svakarmasūtragrathito hi lokaḥ //
suhṛnmitrāryudāsīnadveṣyamadhyasthabāndhavāḥ /
svayamevācarankarma tathā tatra vibhāvyate //

No one can give (or inflict) sorrows or happiness. To think that

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'someone else is responsible for one's happiness or sorrows', is being ill-advised, because it is misleading, erroneous, misconceived and unwise to think so. 'I do it'—this ego or pride is in vain and futile because everyone is shackled (or tied) by the rope of one's own deeds (i.e. every person is impelled by his past and present deeds and their resultant effects. The pure self, the true 'I' which is pure consciousness, in fact does nothing. It has no ego or pride as such) (6). A person establishes various imaginary relationships with others—such as considering them as a well wisher and a friend, or an enemy and one who keeps malice and ill-will, or one who is aloof and indifferent and prefers to observe the median path of evenness and equanimity instead of showing any preference to follow any particular relationships—by behaving and interacting differently with people with whom he comes in contact in this world (7).

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स्वकर्मवशगो नरः। यद्यद्यथागतं तत्तद् भुक्त्वा स्वस्थमना भवेत्।। 8।।
न मे भोगागमे वाञ्छा न मे भोगविवर्जने। आगच्छत्वथ मागच्छत्वभोगवशगो भवेत्।। 9।।

sukhaṃ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṃ svakarmavaśago naraḥ /
yadyadyathāgataṃ tattad bhuktvā svasthamanā bhavet //
na me bhogāgame vāñchā na me bhogavivarjane /
āgacchatvatha māgacchatvabhogavaśago bhavet //

Hence, a person should bear (cope with) all sorrows or happiness that come along his way due to the effects of his past deeds (Prarabdha) with great fortitude, indifference, forbearance, equanimity and placidity of mind. And, as a consequence, he should remain calm, cheerful, happy and serene (8).

We do not desire to acquire and enjoy the pleasures of the sense organs and the objects of this materialistic world, nor do we wish to abandon or forsake them. Whether they come or not (i.e. whether we acquire them, whether we can enjoy them or not), we are not at all dependent on them for our happiness and well beings (i.e. we do not yearn for or bother about them for our happiness) (9).

यस्मिन् देशे च काले च यस्माद्वा येन केन वा। कृतं शुभाशुभं कर्म भोज्यं तत्तत्र नान्यथा।। 10।।
अलं हर्षविषादाभ्यां शुभाशुभफलोदये। विधात्रा विहितं यद्यत्तदलङ्घ्यं सुरासुरैः।। 11।।

yasmin deśe ca kāle ca yasmādvā yena kena vā /
kṛtaṃ śubhāśubhaṃ karma bhojyaṃ tattatra nānyathā //

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alaṃ harṣaviṣādābhyāṃ śubhāśubhaphalodaye /
vidhātrā vihitaṃ yadyattadalaṅghyaṃ surāsuraiḥ //

No matter in which country a man lives or whatever is the time or circumstance, all the deeds done by him, whether they are good or bad, auspicious or inauspicious, without doubt will have their respective effects, and the man is bound to enjoy or suffer their consequences accordingly (10). Hence, one should neither feel happy and joyous nor feel tormented and miserable with the sprouting and ripening of the fruits (results or effects) of those deeds, whether auspicious (good, righteous) or inauspicious (bad, unrighteous) respectively. This is because the edict (or the sacrosanct rules of existential behaviour and the inviolable laws of Nature) that have been laid by the creator (the supreme Lord) cannot be violated (or superseded) by either the Gods or the Demons (11).

सर्वदा सुखदुःखाभ्यां नरः प्रत्यवरुध्यते। शरीरं पुण्यपापाभ्यामुत्पन्नं सुखदुःखवत्।। 12।।
सुखस्यानन्तरं दुःखं दुःखस्यानन्तरं सुखम्। द्वयमेतद्धि जन्तूनामलङ्घ्यं दिनरात्रिवत्।। 13।।

sarvadā sukhaduḥkhābhyāṃ naraḥ pratyavarudhyate /
śarīraṃ puṇyapāpābhyāmutpannaṃ sukhaduḥkhavat //
sukhasyānantaraṃ duḥkhaṃ duḥkhasyānantaraṃ sukham /
dvayametaddhi jantūnāmalaṅghyaṃ dinarātrivat //

A man is constantly surrounded by a variety of sorrows, miseries and agonies as well as by different comforts, happiness and joys pertaining to this body, because the human body is the result of a cocktail or a combination of results of the different deeds done by the creature in the past life, some of which were sinful and evil while others were good and auspiciousness. It is therefore natural that the body is subject to their inherent characteristics and qualifying features (12). Sorrow, agony and misery follows happiness, joy and comfort, and vice versa. They occur in a sequential cycle and are unavoidable by the creature like the day and night (13).

सुखमध्ये स्थितं दुःखं दुःखमध्ये स्थितं सुखम्। द्वयमन्योन्यसंयुक्तं प्रोच्यते जलपङ्कवत्।। 14।।
तस्माद्धैर्येण विद्वांस इष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु। न हृष्यन्ति न मुह्यन्ति सर्वं मायेति भावनात्।। 15।।

sukhamadhye sthitaṃ duḥkhaṃ duḥkhamadhye sthitaṃ sukham /
dvayamanyonyasaṁyuktaṃ procyate jalapaṅkavat //
tasmāddhairyeṇa vidvāṁsa iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu /
na hṛṣyanti na muhyanti sarvaṃ māyeti bhāvanāt //

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Sorrows and agonies are inherent to, an integral part of, inseparable from and coupled to happiness and joy, and vice versa. Both of them have the same relationship with each other as water has with slush (14). This is why the wise ones regard 'everything as an illusion', and bear with fortitude, forbearance and equanimity both success and disaster, treating them alike, without having either the emotions of delight and happiness or of anguish and remorse at them at all. (15).

[Note :—(1) Verse nos. 4-15 can be called Laxman-Gita, or the Gospel of Laxman.

(2) Sorrows and happiness depend on the outlook of the person to a given set of circumstances. Those who are wise and erudite know for certain that both are a result of some past deed done by them willingly or unwillingly. If they respond to these emotions and react accordingly, they would create another set of consequences, the effect of which would have to be borne by them in the future. So, it is wise to break the chain and find liberation and final deliverance at the earliest. That is why they remain indifferent and aloof to all the sufferings and enjoyments of the body and live with equanimity and aloofness.]

गुहलक्ष्मणयोरेवं भाषतोर्विमलं नभः। बभूव रामः सलिलं स्पृष्ट्वा प्रातः समाहितः।। 16।।
उवाच शीघ्रं सुदृढां नावमानय मे सखे। श्रुत्वा रामस्य वचनं निषादाधिपतिर्गुहः।। 17।।
स्वयमेव दृढां नावमानिनाय सुलक्षणाम्। स्वामिन्नारुह्यतां नौकां सीतया लक्ष्मणेन च।।18।।

guhalakṣmaṇayorevaṃ bhāṣatorvimalaṃ nabhaḥ /
babhūva rāmaḥ salilaṃ spṛṣṭvā prātaḥ samāhitaḥ //
uvāca śīghraṃ sudṛḍhaṃ nāvamānaya me sakhe /
śrutvā rāmasya vacanaṃ niṣādādhipatirguhaḥ //
svayameva dṛḍhaṃ nāvamānināya sulakṣaṇām /
svāminnāruhyatāṃ naukāṃ sītayā lakṣmaṇena ca //

While Guha and Laxman were talking with each other, the dawn illuminated the sky. Then Sri Ram became alert and carefully sipped a palmful of water and did his daily purification rituals (16). After that he said, 'Oh friend! Bring a strong boat for me soon'. Hearing these words of Sri Ram, the lord of the Nishad community himself brought a boat with an auspicious make and markings, and submitted, 'Oh Lord! Board the boat along with Sita and Laxman' (17-18)

वाहये ज्ञातिभिः सार्धमहमेव समाहितः। तथेति राघवः सीतामारोप्य शुभलक्षणाम्।। 19।।
गुहस्य हस्तावालम्ब्य स्वयं चारोहदच्युतः। आयुधादीन् समारोप्य लक्ष्मणोऽप्यारुरोह च।।20।।

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vāhaye jñātibhiḥ sārdhamahameva samāhitaḥ /
tatheti rāghavaḥ sītāmāropya śubhalakṣaṇām //
guhasya hastāvālambya svayaṃ cārohadacyutaḥ /
āyudhādīn samāropya lakṣmaṇo'pyāruroha ca //

I shall row it myself most carefully along with my kin and clansmen'. Sri Ram first put the virtuous and good charactered Sita on it (19). Then he held the hands of Guha and boarded the boat himself. Thereafter, having placed his arms and armaments on board, Laxman himself boarded the boat (20).

[Note :—We find here that as in previous occasions, it is Sita who precedes the Lord and Laxman on the forward journey. See canto 4, verse no.62-63 and canto 5, verse no, 43 in this context.]

गुहस्तान्वाहयामास ज्ञातिभिः सहितः स्वयम्। गङ्गामध्ये गता गङ्गां प्रार्थयामास जानकी॥ 21॥
देवि गङ्गे नमस्तुभ्यं निवृत्ता वनवासतः। रामेण सहिताहं त्वां लक्ष्मणेन च पूजये॥ 22॥
इत्युक्त्वा परकूलं तौ शनैरुत्तीर्य जग्मतुः॥ 23॥

guhastānvāhayāmāsa jñātibhiḥ sahitaḥ svayam /
gaṅgāmadhye gatāṃ gaṅgāṃ prārthayāmāsa jānakī //
devi gaṅge namastubhyaṃ nivṛttā vanavāsataḥ /
rāmeṇa sahitāhaṃ tvāṃ lakṣmaṇena ca pūjaye //
ityuktvā parakūlaṃ tau śanairuttīrya jagmatuḥ //

Then Guha rowed the boat himself along with his clansmen. When the boat reached mid-stream, Janki (Sita) prayed to river Ganges (21), 'Oh goddess Ganga! I bow my head before you. While returning from the forest along with Sri Ram and Laxman, I shall worship you accompanied by them '. Having prayed so, they crossed the river in due course and proceeded further ahead on their path (22-23).

[Note :—In Hindu traditional system, a wife is not supposed to pronounce her husband's first name. By saying 'Ram and Laxman', Sita indicates that though for worldly sport she might be Sri Ram's docile wife, but in reality there is no such relationship as husband and wife between the two. These two are at par with each other, complement and supplement each other, and are the two aspects of the same coin, as it were. One is the supreme Brahm and the other is his cosmic, infinite, stupendously powerful and majestic authority and energy as well as his magical delusion creating powers that have unveiled this fascinating creation.]

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गुहोऽपि राघवं प्राह गमिष्यामि त्वया सह। अनुज्ञां देहि राजेन्द्र नोचेत्प्राणांस्त्यजाम्यहम्।। 24।।

guho'pi rāghavaṃ prāha gamiṣyāmi tvayā saha /
anujñāṃ dehi rājendra nocetprāṇāṁstyajāmyaham //

Then Guha requested Raghav (Sri Ram), 'Oh Rajendra (King of kings)! I shall also accompany you. Give me your consent. Otherwise I shall leave my life (i.e. die)' (24).

[Note :—It appears he is the fifth person threatening Sri Ram that he would commit suicide if the Lord does not take him along—earlier, it was Kaushalya, Laxman, Sita and the citizens.]

श्रुत्वा नैषादिवचनं श्रीरामस्तमथाब्रवीत्। चतुर्दश समाः स्थित्वा दण्डके पुनरप्यहम्।। 25।।
आयास्याम्युदितं सत्यं नासत्यं रामभाषितम्।
इत्युक्त्वालिङ्ग्य तं भक्तं समाश्वास्य पुनः पुनः।।26।।
निवर्तयामास गुहं सोऽपि कृच्छ्राद्ययौ गृहम्।।27।।

śrutvā naiṣādivacanaṃ śrīrāmastamathābravīt /
caturdaśa samāḥ sthitvā daṇḍake punarapyaham //
āyāsyābhyuditaṃ satyaṃ nāsatyaṃ rāmabhāṣitam /
ityuktvāliṅgya taṃ bhaktaṃ samāśvāsya punaḥ punaḥ //
nivartayāmāsa guhaṃ so'pi kṛcchrādyayau gṛham //

Hearing the vow of Nishad, Sri Ram said to him, 'I shall come here after spending fourteen years in the Dandakaranya forest. Whatever I say is the truth, for verily, Ram does not tell a lie'. Saying this, Sri Ram consoled his devotee Guha, embraced him repeatedly with affection, and then bid him farewell to him. Guha returned home unwillingly and with great difficulty (i.e. with a heavy, unwilling, distressed and remorseful heart) (25-27).

ततो रामस्तु वैदेह्या लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः।। 28।।
भरद्वाजाश्रमपदं गत्वा बहिरुपस्थितः। तत्रैकं बटुकं दृष्ट्वा रामः प्राह च हे बटो।। 29।।
रामो दाशरथिः सीतालक्ष्मणाभ्यां समन्वितः। आस्ते बहिर्वनस्येति ह्युच्यतां मुनिसन्निधौ।।30।।

tato rāmastu vaidehyā lakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ //
bharadvājāśramapadaṃ gatvā bahirupasthitaḥ /
tatraikaṃ vaṭukaṃ dṛṣṭvā rāmaḥ prāha ca he vaṭo //
rāmo dāśarathiḥ sītālakṣmaṇābhyāṃ samanvitaḥ /
āste bahirvanasyeti hyucyatāṃ munisannidhau //

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Thereafter, Sri Ram, along with Vaidehi (Sita) and Laxman, arrived near the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj and stood outside it. Seeing a resident Brahmachari (celibate; the sage's disciple) there, he said to him, 'Oh the hermit's attendant (28-29). Go and inform your Guru (revered teacher) that the son of Dashrath, Ram, is standing outside the hermitage accompanied by Sita and Laxman' (30).

तच्छ्रुत्वा सहसा गत्वा पादयोः पतितो मुनेः। स्वामिन् रामः समागत्य वनाद्बहिरवस्थितः॥ 31॥
सभार्यः सानुजः श्रीमानाह मां देवसन्निभः। भरद्वाजाय मुनये ज्ञापयस्व यथोचितम्॥32॥

tacchrutvā sahasā gatvā pādayoḥ patito muneḥ /
svāmin rāmaḥ samāgatya vanādbahiravasthitaḥ //
sabhāryaḥ sānujaḥ śrīmānāha māṃ devasannibhaḥ /
bharadvājāya munaye jñāpayasva yathocitam //

Hearing these words, the Brahmachari went immediately to the sage, touched his head at the feet of sage Bharadwaj and said, 'Oh Lord! Sri Ram has come with his wife and younger brother, and he is standing outside. Sri Ram—who is as revered, venerated and exalted as the Gods—has asked me to convey the news of his arrival to you (31-32).

तच्छ्रुत्वा सहसोत्थाय भरद्वाजो मुनीश्वरः। गृहीत्वार्घ्यं च पाद्यं च रामसामीप्यमाययौ॥ 33॥
दृष्ट्वा रामं यथान्यायं पूजयित्वा सलक्ष्मणम्। आह मे पर्णशालां भो राम राजीवलोचन॥34॥
आगच्छ पादरजसा पुनीहि रघुनन्दन। इत्युक्त्वोटजमानीय सीतया सह राघवौ॥ 35॥

tacchrutvā sahasotthāya bharadvājo munīśvaraḥ /
gṛhītvārghyaṃ ca pādyaṃ ca rāmasāmīpyamāyayau //
dṛṣṭvā rāmaṃ yathānyāyaṃ pūjayitvā salakṣmaṇam /
āha me parṇaśālāṃ bho rāma rājīvalocana //
āgaccha pādarajasā punīhi raghunandana /
ityuktvoṭajamānīya sītayā saha raghāvau //

Hearing this, the exalted sage Bharadwaj stood up instantly, and taking along water for oblation and other offerings with him, he came near Sri Ram (33). Seeing Sri Ram, he worshipped him along with Laxman in a proper (traditional) way, and welcoming him, he said, 'Oh Sri Ram! Oh the lotus-eyed one! Come. Purify my thatched hut with the dust of your feet'. Saying this, he escorted the two brothers along with Sita to his hut (34-35).

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भक्त्या पुनः पूजयित्वा चकारातिथ्यमुत्तमम्। अद्याहं तपसः पारं गतोऽस्मि तव सङ्गमात्।। 36।।
ज्ञातं राम तवोदन्तं भूतं चागामिकं च यत्। जानामि त्वां परात्मानं मायया कार्यमानुषम्।।37।।

bhaktyā punaḥ pūjayitvā cakārātithyamuttamam /
adyāhaṃ tapasaḥ pāraṃ gato'smi tava saṅgamāt //
jñātaṃ rāma tavodantaṃ bhūtaṃ cāgāmikaṃ ca yat /
jānāmi tvāṃ parātmānaṃ māyayā kāryamānuṣam //

Then he worshipped them with full devotion, systematically, and formally welcomed them. Then the sage said, 'My austerities and penances have become fulfilled (or duly rewarded) by having your communion (i.e. by having the privilege and honour of meeting you) (36). Oh Sri Ram! I know all about your past and future. I also know that you are the supreme Lord himself personified, and have assumed a human form using your delusion creating powers to complete the job of the Gods (which is the elimination of demonic forces from the earth) (37).

यदर्थमवतीर्णोऽसि प्रार्थितो ब्रह्मणा पुरा। यदर्थं वनवासस्ते यत्करिष्यसि वै पुरः।। 38।।
जानामि ज्ञानदृष्ट्याहं जातया त्वदुपासनात्। इतः परं त्वां किं वक्ष्ये कृतार्थोऽहं रघूत्तम।।39।।
यस्त्वां पश्यामि काकुत्स्थं पुरुषं प्रकृतेः परम्। रामस्तमभिवाद्याह सीतालक्ष्मणसंयुतः।।40।।

yadarthamavatīrṇo'si prārthito brahmaṇā purā /
yadarthaṃ vanavāsaste yatkariṣyasi vai punaḥ //
jānāmi jñānadṛṣṭyāhaṃ jātayā tvadupāsanāt /
itaḥ paraṃ tvāṃ kiṃ vakṣye kṛtārtho'haṃ raghūttama //
yastvāṃ paśyāmi kākutsthaṃ puruṣaṃ prakṛteḥ param /
rāmastamabhivādyāha sītālakṣmaṇasaṁyutaḥ //

The reason why you have manifested (revealed, incarnated) yourself because of Lord Brahma's prayers in an earlier time, the reason why you have been sent to exile in the forest, and whatever you shall be doing in the future—I know all that by virtue of the transcendental mystical vision which I have acquired by the grace (or on the strength) of your devotion and worship. Oh the best one in Raghu's clan (Sri Ram)! What more can I tell you? I have been greatly honoured and feel privileged that I am personally watching you, oh the exalted son in the clan of Kukustha, who are beyond 'Nature' and are the most exalted supreme Soul called Purushottam'. Then, along with Sita and Laxman, Sri Ram bowed before the sage and said (38-40)—

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अनुग्राह्यास्त्वया ब्रह्मन्वयं क्षत्रियबान्धवाः। इति सम्भाष्य तेऽन्योन्यमुषित्वा मुनिसन्निधौ।। 41।।

anugrāhyāstvayā brahmanvayaṃ kṣatriyabāndhavāḥ /
iti sambhāṣya te'nyonyamuṣitvā munisannidhau //

'Oh Brahmin (literally, the exalted, learned, wise one)! We are born in the Kshatriya clan; hence, we are subjects of your grace, mercy and kindness'. Having mutually shown respect to each other, they (Sri Ram, Sita and Laxman) put up with him for the night at his hermitage (41).

[Note :—Bharadwaj Ashram is located near present day Allahabad.]

प्रातरुत्थाय यमुनामुत्तीर्य मुनिदारकैः। कृताप्लवेन मुनिना दृष्टमार्गेण राघवः।। 42।।
प्रययौ चित्रकूटाद्रिं वाल्मीकेर्यत्र चाश्रमः। गत्वा रामोऽथ वाल्मीकेराश्रमं ऋषिसङ्कुलम्।। 43।।
नानामृगद्विजाकीर्णं नित्यपुष्पफलाकुलम्। तत्र दृष्ट्वा समासीनं वाल्मीकिं मुनिसत्तमम्।। 44।।

prātarutthāya yamunāmuttīrya munidārakaiḥ /
kṛtāplavena muninā dṛṣṭamārgeṇa rāghavaḥ //
prayayau citrakūṭādriṃ vālmīkeryatra cāśramaḥ /
gatvā rāmo'tha vālmīkerāśramaṃ ṛṣisaṅkulam //
nānāmṛgadvijākīrṇaṃ nityapuṣpaphalākulam /
tatra dṛṣṭvā samāsānaṃ vālmīkiṃ munisattamam //

Waking up in the morning, Raghav (Sri Ram) boarded a large boat without a sail (a type of canoe) which was constructed by the boys residing in the hermitage of Bharadwaj, and used it to cross the river Yamuna. He proceeded towards the Chitrakoot mountains as directed by sage Bharadwaj (42). At Chitrakoot, sage Valmiki's hermitage was located. When he reached the sage's charming hermitage—which was full of other hermits and ascetics (43), which had a wide variety of animals and birds forming its integral part, and which was well endowed with all types of fruits and flowers—he saw that the most exalted sage was sitting there (44).

ननाम शिरसा रामो लक्ष्मणेन च सीतया। दृष्ट्वा रामं रमानाथं वाल्मीकिर्लोकसुन्दरम्।। 45।।
जानकीलक्ष्मणोपेतं जटामुकुटमण्डितम्। कन्दर्पसदृशाकारं कमनीयाम्बुजेक्षणम्।। 46।।

nanāma śirasā rāmo lakṣmaṇena ca sītayā /
dṛṣṭvā rāmaṃ ramānāthaṃ vālmīkirlokasundaram //
jānakīlakṣmaṇopetaṃ jaṭāmukuṭamaṇḍitam /
kandarpasadṛśākāraṃ kamanīyāmbujekṣaṇam //

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Then Sri Ram, along with Laxman and Sita, paid his respects to him with a bowed head. Sage Valmiki's eyes fell on Lord Ram—whose eyes were as beautiful as a lotus flower, whose physical form was charming like that of Kamdeo-cupid, who had a crown of matted hairs on his head, who could enchant the three Lokas with his stupendous beauty, and who was the Lord of Laxmi—accompanied by Sita and Laxman (45-46).

दृष्ट्वैव सहसोत्तस्थौ विस्मयानिमिषेक्षणः। आलिङ्ग्य परमानन्दं रामं हर्षाश्रुलोचनः।। 47।।
पूजयित्वा जगत्पूज्यं भक्त्यार्घ्यादिभिरादृतः। फलमूलैः स मधुरैर्भोजयित्वा च लालितः।।48।।

dṛṣṭvaiva sahasottasthau vismayānimiṣekṣaṇaḥ /
āliṅgya paramānandaṃ rāmaṃ harṣāśrulocanaḥ //
pūjayitvā jagatpūjyaṃ bhaktyārghyādibhiradṛtaḥ /
phalamūlaiḥ sa madhurairbhojayitvā ca lālitaḥ //

Immediately on seeing him, sage Valmiki stood up most eagerly. His eyes were blank with astonishment and disbelief, and they were filled with tears of exhilaration and delight at the same time. He affectionately embraced Sri Ram who is an embodiment of supreme bliss, peace and tranquility (47). He duly worshipped the Lord who is worshipped by the whole world with full devotion and dedication by offering oblations etc. to him, offered him eatables such as sweet fruits and edible roots as refreshment, and in this way, he showed affectionate and most warm welcome to him (48).

राघवः प्राञ्जलिः प्राह वाल्मीकिं विनयान्वितः। पितुराज्ञां पुरस्कृत्य दण्डकानागता वयम्।। 49।।
भवन्तो यदि जानन्ति किं वक्ष्यामोऽत्र कारणम्। यत्र मे सुखवासाय भवेत्स्थानं वदस्व तत्।।50।।

rāghavaḥ prāñjaliḥ prāha vālmīkiṃ vinayānvitaḥ /
piturājñāṃ puraskṛtya daṇḍakānāgatā vayam //
bhavanto yadi jānantī kiṃ vakṣyāmo'tra kāraṇam /
yatra me sukhavāsāya bhavetsthānaṃ vadasva tat //

Then Raghav (Sri Ram) said most politely to sage Valmiki with palms joined together in submission—'We have obeyed our father and have come to Dandakaranya forest (49). You know everything, so what reason should we give you for it? Now, please tell (show) me a place where I can stay peacefully and comfortably in the forest (50).

सीतया सहितः कालं किञ्चित्तत्र नयाम्यहम्। इत्युक्तो राघवेणासौ मुनिः सस्मितमब्रवीत्।। 51।।
त्वमेव सर्वलोकानां निवासस्थानमुत्तमम्। तवापि सर्वभूतानि निवाससदनानि हि।। 52।।

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sītayā sahitaḥ kālaṃ kiñcittatra nayāmyaham /
ityukto rāghaveṇāsau muniḥ sasmitamabravīt //
tvameva sarvalokānāṃ nivāsasthānamuttamam /
tavāpi sarvabhūtāni nivāsasadanāni hi //

At the place directed by you, I shall spend some time living with Sita'. When Raghav (Sri Ram) had said this, the sage smiled enigmatically and said (51), 'Oh Sri Ram! You are the only and the best place for all the creatures to reside in (i.e. you are the only solace and refuge for the creatures, they take and find shelter with you; you are the final resting place for their soul), while at the same time, they are your abode (because you reside in their bosom as their pure consciousness, their pure self, their microcosmic and subtle soul or their Atma) (52).

एवं साधारणं स्थानमुक्तं ते रघुनन्दन। सीतया सहितस्येति विशेषं पृच्छतस्तव।। 53।।
तद्वक्ष्यामि रघुश्रेष्ठ यत्ते नियतमन्दिरम्। शान्तानां समदृष्टीनामद्वेष्टृणां च जन्तुषु।
त्वामेव भजतां नित्यं हृदयं तेऽधिमन्दिरम्।। 54।।

evaṃ sādhāraṇaṃ sthānamuktaṃ te raghunandana /
sītayā sahitasyeti viśeṣaṃ pṛcchatastava //
tadvakṣyāmi raghuśreṣṭha yatte niyatamandiram /
śāntānāṃ samadṛṣṭīnāmadveṣṭṛṇāṃ ca jantuṣu /
tvāmeva bhajatāṃ nityaṃ hṛdayaṃ te'dhimandiram //

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! This is the general place (i.e. in a nutshell, so to speak) where you can (or do) reside. But since you have asked me for some specific place where you can stay with Sita (53), so oh the exalted son of Raghu's clan, I shall now list those specific places where you can live. He who is tranquil, serene, calm and peaceful, who treats all alike with equanimity and equitability without any distinction whatsoever and is uniform towards all, who is without any jealousy, envy, malice, ill-will and hatred towards anyone, and who constantly, consistently and persistently worships, reveres, honours, adores and remembers you day and night—his heart is the main (chief) place where you can (or do) reside (i.e. it is your temple) (54).

धर्माधर्मान्परित्यज्य त्वामेव भजतोऽनिशम्। सीतया सह ते राम तस्य हृत्सुखमन्दिरम्।। 55।।
त्वन्मन्त्रजापको यस्तु त्वामेव शरणं गतः। निर्द्वन्द्वो निःस्पृहस्तस्य हृदयं ते सुमन्दिरम्।। 56।।

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dharmādharmānparityajya tvāmeva bhajato'niśam /
sītayā saha te rāma tasya hṛtsukhamandiram //
tvanmantrajāpako yastu tvāmeva śaraṇaṃ gataḥ /
nirdvandvo niḥspṛhastasya hṛdayaṃ te sumandiram //

He who is not too obsessed with either Dharma (righteousness, noble deeds, probity etc.) or Adharma (unrighteousness, evil deeds, impropriety etc.), and instead, constantly worships, adores and remembers you—Oh Sri Ram, you should reside in his heart-like temple most cheerfully, joyfully and comfortably along with Sita (55). He who reverentially repeats (does Jaap of) your holy name, who takes shelter and refuge in your holy feet, who is without confusions, doubts, suspicions or dilemmas of any kind, and who does not have any worldly attachments, allurements and attractions of any manner whatsoever and remains neutral, aloof, indifferent, dispassionate and detached—the heart of such a person is your beautiful temple (residence, abode) (56).

निरहङ्कारिणः शान्ता ये रागद्वेषवर्जिताः। समलोष्टाश्मकनकास्तेषां ते हृदयं गृहम्।। 57।।
त्वयि दत्तमनोबुद्धिर्यः सन्तुष्टः सदा भवेत्। त्वयि सन्यक्तकर्मा यस्तन्मनस्ते शुभं गृहम्।।58।।

nirahaṅkāriṇaḥ śāntā ye rāgadveṣavarjitāḥ /
samaloṣṭāśmakanakāsteṣāṃ te hṛdayaṃ gṛham //
tvayi dattamanobuddhiryaḥ santuṣṭa sadā bhavet /
tvayi santyaktakarmā yastanmanaste śubhaṃ gṛham //

He who is devoid of any kind of pride, ego, haughtiness and arrogance, who is of a tranquil, peaceful, calm and serene temperament and emotions, who is without any sort of attachment, attraction, desire or infatuation with anything nor does he have any jealousy, envy, malice, hatred or ill-will towards anyone, and who treats a dead 'Pinda' (a ball-shaped rounded dough made of cereals offered to dead ancestors; literally, any lifeless dead body), a stone and a piece of gold equally (without distinguishing between them)—the heart of such a person is your residence (57). He who concentrates (focuses) his mind and intellect, his thoughts and emotions on you and remains ever contented and satisfied, and who offers all his deeds (and their results) to you—his mind and heart is your auspicious abode (58).

यो न द्वेष्टयप्रियं प्राप्य प्रियं प्राप्य न हृष्यति। सर्वं मायेति निश्चित्य त्वां भजेत्तन्मनो गृहम्।। 59।।
षड्भावादिविकारान्यो देहे पश्यति नात्मनि। क्षुत्तृट् सुखं भयं दुःखं प्राणबुद्ध्योर्निरीक्षते।।60।।
संसारधर्मैर्निर्मुक्तस्तस्य ते मानसं गृहम्।।61।।

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yo na dveṣṭyapriyaṃ prāpya priyaṃ prāpya na hṛṣyate /
sarvaṃ māyeti niścitya tvāṃ bhajettanmano gṛham //
ṣaḍbhāvādivikārānyo dehe paśyati nātmani /
kṣuttṛṭ sukhaṃ bhayaṃ duḥkhaṃ prāṇabuddhyornirīkṣate //
saṁsāradharmairnirmuktastasya te mānasaṃ gṛham //

He who does not feel any kind of malice, ill-will or hatred, i.e. never gets agitated, angry, upset and vengeful even when subjected to unpleasantness or unfavourable and unsavoury circumstances of all kinds, and neither does he feel exhilarated and gets thrilled, happily excited or delighted on receiving anything pleasant or having favourable circumstances, and having decided that all the worldly events and happenings are mere illusions, deceptions and hallucinations created by Maya, he constantly remembers you, worships you, reveres you, honours you and adores you—the heart and mind of such a person is your residence (59). He who sees the six faults[1] in this gross body but not in the eternal, imperishable and pure soul, who regards hunger, thirst, happiness, sorrows, grief, consternations and fears etc. as a defect of the vital winds called Prans and the mind-intellect complex (and not of the eternal, pure, enlightened, wise, self contained and self satisfied soul or Atma which is beyond any of the faults), and who is detached from the various aspects of the behavioral world—the Mana (the thoughts and emotions, the heart, mind and intellect) of such a person is your own abode (60-61).

[Note :—The six faults or defects relevant to the body are—(1) those associate with power and authority, such as arrogance, haughtiness, ego, pride and vanity; (2) the horrible torments undergone during birth; (3) the problems of growing up and development; (4) the problems associated with change of any kind happening in life; (5) the tendency of the body to gradually lose its vigour and vitality and become progressively weak and decrepit; and (6) its ultimate decay, destruction and ruin.]

पश्यन्ति ये सर्वगुहाशयस्थं त्वां चिद्घनं सत्यमनन्तमेकम्।
अलेपकं सर्वगतं वरेण्यं तेषां हृदब्जे सह सीतया वस।।62।।

paśyanti ye sarvaguhāśayasthaṃ tvāṃ cidghanaṃ satyamanantamekam /
alepakaṃ sarvagataṃ vareṇyaṃ teṣāṃ hṛdabje saha sītayā vasa //

He who sees the Supreme Being represented by you who are a treasure of enlightenment and wisdom, are a personification,

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embodiment or an image of the universal and ultimate truth, are eternal and infinite having no beginning or an end, are the one and the only one in this creation (i.e. you are matchless, peerless, unparalleled, unique and without a second), are faultless, untarnished and sinless, are all-pervading, omnipresent, all knowing and omniscient, are worthy of honour, reverence, adoration, worship, and devotion, are present in the bosom of all the creatures as their Atma or soul—oh Sri Ram, you and Sita should make residence in their lotus-like hearts (62).

निरन्तराभ्यासदृढीकृतात्मनां त्वत्पादसेवापरिनिष्ठितानाम्।
त्वन्नामकीर्त्या हतकल्मषाणां सीतासमेतस्य गृहं हृदब्जे।। 63।।

nirantarābhyāsadṛḍhīkṛtātmanāṃ tvatpādasevāpariniṣṭhitānām /
tvannāmakīrtyā hatakalmaṣāṇāṃ sītāsametasya gṛhaṃ hṛdabje //

He whose faculty of reasoning, thoughts, discrimination and intellect as well as the virtues of the mind to concentrate and focus and pay attention to anything (collectively called 'Chitta') have become stable by constant practice, who involves himself constantly in the service of your holy feet (i.e. remains steadfastly devoted to you and in serving you), whose sins and accumulated effects of evil deeds have been destroyed by the singing of your holy name in chorus (because it purifies the heart, mind and the intellect)—their lotus-like heart is the residence of both you and Sita (63).

[Note :—Verse nos. 62-63 can be called the Gospel of sage Valmiki.]

राम त्वन्नाममहिमा वर्ण्यते केन वा कथम्। यत्प्रभावादहं राम ब्रह्मर्षित्वमवाप्तवान्।। 64।।
अहं पुरा किरातेषु किरातैः सह वर्धितः। जन्ममात्रद्विजत्वं मे शूद्राचाररतः सदा।। 65।।

rāma tvannāmamahimā varṇyate kena vā katham /
yatprabhāvādahaṃ rāma brahmarṣitvamavāptavān //
ahaṃ purā kirāteṣu kirātaiḥ saha vardhitaḥ /
janmamātradvijatvaṃ me śūdrācāraratataḥ sadā //

Oh Sri Ram! By the potential power and grace of that holy name, I have achieved the exalted stature of a 'Brahmarishi' (a sage who has attained the supreme state of Brahm-hood)—how can anyone describe the glory, the potentials and fame of that divine name? (64). In an earlier time, I lived and was brought up among the Kirats (the forest tribals). My activities and behaviour were like Shudras (the lowest

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class in the society); my higher class was confined only to my birth (because I was born a Brahmin) (65).

शूद्रायां बहवः पुत्रा उत्पन्ना मेऽजितात्मनः। ततश्चौरैश्च सङ्गम्य चौरोऽहमभवं पुरा।। 66।।
धनुर्बाणधरो नित्यं जीवानामन्तकोपमः। एकदा मुनयः सप्त दृष्टा महति कानने।। 67।।

śūdrāyāṃ bahavaḥ putrā utpannā me'jitātmanaḥ /
tataścauraiśca saṅgamya cauro'hamabhavaṃ purā //
dhanurbāṇadharo nityaṃ jīvānāmantakopamaḥ /
ekadā munayaḥ sapta dṛṣṭā mahati kānane //

Many a sons were born to this lustful me from my Shudra wife (i.e. though I was born a higher class Brahmin, my deeds had turned me into a virtual slave to my passion and lusts).At that time, due to the company of robbers, I too had become a great bandit myself (66). Like Kaal who represents death and destruction for creatures, I too also held a bow and arrow to threaten and if necessary kill my victims. One day, I saw the seven celestial sages pass through a dense forest (67).

साक्षान्मया प्रकाशन्तो ज्वलनार्कसमप्रभाः। तानन्वधावं लोभेन तेषां सर्वपरिच्छदान्।। 68।।
ग्रहीतुकामस्तत्राहं तिष्ठ तिष्ठेति चाब्रवम्। दृष्ट्वा मां मुनयोऽपृच्छन्किमायासि द्विजाधम।। 69।।

sākṣānmayā prakāśanto jvalanārkasamaprabhāḥ /
tānanvadhāvaṃ lobhena teṣāṃ sarvaparicchadān //
grahītukāmastatrāhaṃ tiṣṭha tiṣṭheti cābravam /
dṛṣṭvā māṃ munayo'pṛcchankimāyāsi dvijādhama //

They were self-illuminated like the fire and the sun due to their own brilliant and divine splendour and radiance. With a desire to rob them of their priceless clothes etc., I ran behind them due to greed, avarice and turpitude (68). I said, 'Stop, Stop!' The sages looked at me and admonished me, saying 'Oh the fallen Dwij (Brahmin), why are you coming behind us?' (69).

अहं तानब्रवं किञ्चिदादातुं मुनिसत्तमाः। पुत्रदारादयः सन्ति बहवो मे बुभुक्षिताः।। 70।।
तेषां संरक्षणार्थाय चरामि गिरिकानने। ततो मामूचुरव्यग्राः पृच्छ गत्वा कुटुम्बकम्।।71।।
यो यो मया प्रतिदिनं क्रियते पापसञ्चयः। यूयं तद्भागिनः किं वा नेति वेति पृथक्पृथक्।।72।।

ahaṃ tānabravaṃ kiñcidādātuṃ munisattamāḥ /
putradārādayaḥ santi bahavo me bubhukṣitāḥ //

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teṣāṃ saṁrakṣaṇārthāya carāmi girikānane /
tato māmūcuravyagrāḥ pṛccha gatvā kuṭumbakam //
yo yo mayā pratidinaṃ kriyate pāpasañcayaḥ /
yūyaṃ tadbhāginaḥ kiṃ vā neti veti pṛthakpṛthak //

I replied, 'Oh the best amongst sages! I have many hungry sons and kins to look after. So I have come to take something so as to sustain them (70). I keep on roaming in the forest and surrounding mountains (looting travellers and killing animals) for feeding and sustaining them'. Then those sages fearlessly asked me, 'Alright, go once again to your kinsmen and ask them individually if they will share the sins and treasury of evils that you are accumulating daily by your misdeeds for their sake? (71-72).

वयं स्थास्यामहे तावदागमिष्यसि निश्चयः। तथेत्युक्त्वा गृहं गत्वा मुनिभिर्यदुदीरितम्।। 73।।
अपृच्छं पुत्रदारादींस्तैरुक्तोऽहं रघूत्तम। पापं तवैव तत्सर्वं वयं तु फलभागिनः।। 74।।

vayaṃ sthāsyāmahe tāvadāgamiṣyasi niścayaḥ /
tathetyuktvā gṛhaṃ gatvā munibhiryadudīritam //
apṛcchaṃ putradārādīṁstairukto'haṃ raghūttama /
pāpaṃ tavaiva tatsarvaṃ vayaṃ tu phalabhāginaḥ //

Be assured that till the time you come back, we will stay here, and not run away or escape'. I said 'alright' and came home, and asked my sons and wife the question which the sages had asked me. Oh the best in the Raghu's clan (Sri Ram)! To my surprise they said, 'The sins and evils will be all yours; we only enjoy the fruits that are derived out of it (i.e. wealth, food, clothes etc. that you bring for us. We are not concerned how you bring them or how you manage to gather or arrange for them or the means you employ to acquire them. We are only concerned with the fruits of your efforts)' (73-74).

तच्छ्रुत्वा जातनिर्वेदो विचार्य पुनरागमम्। मुनयो यत्र तिष्ठन्ति करुणापूर्णमानसाः।। 75।।
मुनीनां दर्शनादेव शुद्धान्तःकरणोऽभवम्। धनुरादीन्परित्यज्य दण्डवत्पतितोऽस्म्यहम्।।76।।

tacchrutvā jātanirvedo vicārya punarāgamam /
munayo yatra tiṣṭhanti karuṇāpūrṇamānasāḥ //
munīnāṃ darśanādeva śuddhāntaḥkaraṇo'bhavam /
dhanurādīnparityajya daṇḍavatpatito'smyaham //

When I heard this, I was shell-shocked, utterly disillusioned and dismayed. Being overcome with complete renunciation and

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detachment, I returned to the place where the (seven) sages were. On the way, I was constantly reflecting on the significance of this revelation (75). Then, my internal being was purified, and it turned towards holiness and spirituality at the sight of the sages; I threw away the bow etc. and fell down like a stick (prostrated) on the ground before the sages (76).

रक्षध्वं मां मुनिश्रेष्ठा गच्छन्तं निरयार्णवम्। इत्यग्रे पतितं दृष्ट्वा मामूचुर्मुनिसत्तमाः।। 77।।
उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भद्रं ते सफलः सत्समागमः। उपदेक्ष्यामहे तुभ्यं किञ्चित्तेनैव मोक्ष्यसे।
परस्परं समालोच्य दुर्वृत्तोऽयं द्विजाधमः।। 78।।
उपेक्ष्य एव सद्वृत्तैस्तथापि शरणं गतः। रक्षणीयः प्रयत्नेन मोक्षमार्गोपदेशतः।। 79।।

rakṣadhvaṃ māṃ muniśreṣṭhā gacchantaṃ nirayārṇavam /
ityagre patitaṃ dṛṣṭvā māmūcurmunisattamāḥ //
uttiṣṭhottiṣṭha bhadraṃ te saphalaḥ satsamāgamaḥ /
upadekṣyāmahe tubhyaṃ kiñcittenaiva mokṣyase /
parasparaṃ samālocya durvṛtto'yaṃ dvijādhamaḥ //
upekṣya eva sadvṛttastathāpi śaraṇaṃ gataḥ /
rakṣaṇīyaḥ prayatnena mokṣamārgopadeśataḥ //

'Oh the ones who are the best amongst sages! Save me from falling into this ocean of sins, evils, vices, turpitude, misdeeds and unrighteousness in which I have allowed myself to fall'. Seeing me agitatedly shouting, wailing and lamenting in desperation in this way, they said to me (77), 'Stand up. The good company that you have had with us has borne fruits (i.e. has been successful). Consider yourself fortunate and lucky, for now you would certainly have welfare and auspiciousness. We shall preach you a little, that will be sufficient to liberate you (i.e. provide emancipation and salvation to you)'. Then they held a brief discussion among themselves to the effect that though this wretched and fallen Brahmin is best avoided by gentlemen because of his great sins, evils, misdeeds, misdemeanours and vices, but still, since he has come to seek refuge/shelter with us, we must make sincere efforts to salvage him (or save him from slipping further in the quagmire of sins and evils for saints have a moral duty to salvage souls who are eager for salvation) (78-79).

इत्युक्त्वा राम ते नाम व्यत्यस्ताक्षरपूर्वकम्। एकाग्रमनसात्रैव मरेति जप सर्वदा।। 80।।
आगच्छमः पुनर्यावत्तावदुक्तं सदा जप। इत्युक्त्वा प्रययुः सर्वे मुनयो दिव्यदर्शनाः।। 81।।

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ityuktvā rāma te nāma vyatyastākṣarapūrvakam /
ekāgramanasātraiva mareti japa sarvadā //
āgacchāmaḥ punaryāvattāvaduktaṃ sadā japa /
ityuktvā prayayuḥ sarve munayo divyadarśanāḥ //

Oh Sri Ram! Deciding thus, they reversed the letters of your holy and divine name and said to me, You stay here and constantly, unfailingly and with due devotion, conviction, faith and concentration repeat 'Mara, Mara' (the reverse order of the word 'Ram, Ram') (80). Until the time we come back again, you should steadfastly repeat/ chant these words without fail'. Saying this, all those divine sages went away (81).

अहं यथोपदिष्टं तैस्तथाकरवमञ्जसा। जपन्नेकाग्रमनसा बाह्यं विस्मृतवानहम्।। 82।।
एवं बहुतिथे काले गते निश्चलरूपिणः। सर्वसङ्गविहीनस्य वल्मीकोऽभून्ममोपरि।। 83।।

ahaṃ yathopadiṣṭaṃ taistathākaravamañjasā /
japannekāgramanasā bāhyaṃ vismṛtavānaham //
evaṃ bahutithe kāle gate niścalarūpiṇaḥ /
sarvasaṅgavihīnasya valmīko'bhūnmamopari //

Thereafter, I did exactly as instructed by them. In this way, by constantly doing Japa (i.e. repetition of the holy Mantra) with intense concentration, devotion and faith, I became completely unaware (unconscious) of the entire external world and its stimuli (82). With the passage of a long time, since I was absolutely immobile and devoid of any external contacts, a mound of mud (called 'Valmik') formed over me (83).

ततो युगसहस्रान्ते ऋषयः पुनरागमन्। मामूचुर्निष्क्रमस्वेति तच्छ्रुत्वा तूर्णमुत्थितः।। 84।।
वाल्मीकान्निर्गतश्चाहं नीहारादिव भास्करः। मामप्याहुर्मुनिगणा वाल्मीकिस्त्वं मुनीश्वरः।।85।।

tato yugasahasrānte ṛṣayaḥ punarāgaman /
māmūcurniṣkramasveti tacchrutvā tūrṇamutthitaḥ //
valmīkānnirgataścāhaṃ nīhārādiva bhāskaraḥ /
māmapyāhurmuniganā vālmīkistvaṃ munīśvara //

After the passage of one thousand Yugs, those sages came back again and said to me 'come out', and I stood up immediately (84), coming out of the mud mound like the sun emerging from behind a blanket of fog. Then the sages proclaimed—'Oh sage! Henceforth, you are 'Valmiki'! (85).

[Note :—1 yug = 12 years. So, Valmiki did Tapa for 12,000 years.]

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वल्मीकात्सम्भवो यस्माद् द्वितीयं जन्म तेऽभवत्। इत्युक्त्वा ते ययुर्दिव्यगतिं रघुकुलोत्तम।। 86।।
अहं ते राम नाम्नश्च प्रभावादीदृशोऽभवम्। अद्य साक्षात्प्रपश्यामि ससीतं लक्ष्मणेन च।।87।।
रामं राजीवपत्राक्षं त्वां मुक्तो नात्र संशयः। आगच्छ राम भद्रं ते स्थलं वै दर्शयाम्यहम्।।88।।

valmīkātsambhavo yasmād dvitīyaṃ janma te'bhavat /
ityuktvā te yayurdivyagatiṃ raghukulottama //
ahaṃ te rāma nāmnaśca prabhāvādīdṛśo'bhavam /
adya sākṣātprapaśyāmi sasītaṃ lakṣmaṇena ca //
rāmaṃ rājīvapatrākṣaṃ tvāṃ mukto nātra saṁśayaḥ /
āgaccha rāma bhadraṃ te sthalaṃ vai darśayāmyaham //

Since you have emerged afresh from (i.e. come out from a womb-like) mud mound, hence this is tantamount to your second birth'. Oh the best in Raghu's clan (Sri Ram)! Saying this, they went away to the heavens (86). Oh Sri Ram! I have become such an exalted and fortunate one by the virtue (power, potent, grace, effect) of your holy name that I am having the good fortune of personally and physically viewing you who are a lotus-eyed one, along with Sita and Laxman. Ah! Verily, without doubt—I have been liberated! Oh Sri Ram, come. Now I shall show you the place for your residence during your sojourn in the forest' (87-88).

एवमुक्त्वा मुनिः श्रीमाँल्लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः। शिष्यैः परिवृतो गत्वा मध्ये पर्वतगङ्गयोः।। 89।।
तत्र शालां सुविस्तीर्णां कारयामास वासभूः। प्राक्पश्चिमं दक्षिणोदक् शोभनं मन्दिरद्वयम्।।90।।

evamuktvā muniḥ śrīmāṁllakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ /
śiṣyaiḥ parivṛto gatvā madhye parvatagaṅgayoḥ //
tatra śālāṃ suvistīrṇāṃ kārayāmāsa vāsabhūḥ /
prākpaścimaṃ dakṣiṇodak śobhanaṃ mandiradvayam //

Saying this, the sage, surrounded by his disciples and accompanied by Laxman, went to a place midway between the mountains and river Ganges and had a large cottage-type dwelling constructed there for the use of Sri Ram. There were two rooms in it—one on the East-West axis, and another in the North-South axis (89-90).

[Note:-The place where Sri Ram lived in Chitrakoot was constructed and designed in the above manner. The description is very clear about the layout or plan of the structure. This fact is different from Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas—where the hut for Sri Ram was built by Laxman alone, not with any help from the disciples of sage Valmiki.]

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जानक्या सहितो रामो लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः। तत्र ते देवसदृशा ह्यवसन् भवनोत्तमे।। 91।।
वाल्मीकिना तत्र सुपूजितोऽयं रामः ससीतः सह लक्ष्मणेन।
देवैर्मुनीन्द्रैः सहितो मुदास्ते स्वर्गे यथा देवपतिः सशच्या।।92।।

jānakyā sahito rāmo lakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ /
tatra te devasadṛśā hyavasan bhavanottame //
vālmīkinā tatra supūjito'yaṃ rāmaḥ sasītaḥ saha lakṣmaṇena /
devairmunīdraiḥ sahito mudāste svarge yathā devapatiḥ saśacyā //

Sri Ram, along with Sita and Laxman, took up residence in that magnificent dwelling, most cheerfully and comfortably like Gods do in their divine abodes (91). Having been praised and honoured in all possible ways at the hands of Valmiki, Sri Ram, along with Sita and Laxman and accompanied by the Gods as well as the resident hermits/sages/ascetics etc., began to live there most happily even as Indra, the king of Gods, lives in heaven with his wife Shachi (92).

[Note :—It is evident that Sri Ram was not alone in Chitrakoot for he was accompanied by Gods and hermits etc.]

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Ayodhya Kand — Canto 7

Sumantra's return to Ayodhya; Dashrath's death and cremation; The story of Shrawan Kumar; Bharat's arrival in Ayodhya

श्रीमहादेव उवाच
सुमन्त्रोऽपि तदायोध्यां दिनान्ते प्रविवेश ह। वस्त्रेण मुखमाच्छाद्य वाष्पाकुलितलोचनः।।1।।
बहिरेव रथं स्थाप्य राजानं द्रष्टुमाययौ। जयशब्देन राजानं स्तुत्वा तं प्रणनाम ह।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca
sumantro'pi tadāyodhyāṃ dināṃte praviveśa ha /
vastreṇa mukhamācchādya vāṣpākulitalocanaḥ //
bahireva rathaṃ sthāpya rājānaṃ draṣṭumāyayau /
jayaśabdena rājānaṃ stutvā taṃ praṇanāma ha //

Lord Shiva said to Parvati—'Here, during dusk (twilight hours), Sumantra hid his face (in shame) with a cloth and entered Ayodhya with tearful eyes (1). Leaving the chariot standing outside the gates,

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he went inside the royal palace to meet the king. He announced his arrival by saying the salutary word 'Jai' and bowed his head before the king in respect (2).

ततो राजा नमन्तं तं सुमन्त्रं विह्वलोऽब्रवीत्। सुमन्त्र रामः कुत्रास्ते सीतया लक्ष्मणेन च।। 3।।
कुत्र त्यक्तस्त्वया रामः किं मां पापिनमब्रवीत्।
सीता वा लक्ष्मणो वापि निर्दयं मां किमब्रवीत्।। 4।।
हा राम हा गुणनिधे हा सीते प्रियवादिनि। दुःखार्णवे निमग्नं मां म्रियमाणं न पश्यसि।। 5।।

tato rājā namantaṃ taṃ sumantraṃ vihvalo'bravīt /
sumantra rāmaḥ kutrāste sītayā lakṣmaṇena ca //
kutra tyaktastvayā rāmaḥ kiṃ māṃ pāpinamabravīt /
sītā vā lakṣmaṇo vāpi nirdayaṃ māṃ kimabravīt //
hā rāma hā guṇanidhe hā sīte priyavādini /
duḥkhārṇave nimagnaṃ māṃ mriyamāṇaṃ na paśyasi //

The king saw Sumantra bowing before him alone, and realising what it signifies, he was overcome with extreme grief. He asked, 'Oh Sumantra! Where is Sri Ram along with Sita and Laxman? (3). Where have you left Sri Ram? What did he have to say for this sinner (i.e. what message has he given you for me)? What did Sita and Laxman say for this cruel me? (4). Oh Sri Ram! Oh a treasury of virtues! Oh the soft-spoken Sita! Don't you see that I am dying by getting drowned in a sea of grief and sorrows?' (5).

विलप्यैवं चिरं राजा निमग्नो दुःखसागरे। एवं मन्त्री रुदन्तं तं प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यमब्रवीत्।। 6।।
रामः सीता च सौमित्रिर्मया नीता रथेन ते। शृङ्गवेरपुराभ्याशे गङ्गाकूले व्यवस्थिताः।। 7।।

vilapyaivaṃ ciraṃ rājā nimagno duḥkhasāgare /
evaṃ mantrī rudantaṃ taṃ prāñjalirvākyamabravīt //
rāmaḥ sītā ca saumitrirmayā nītā rathena te /
śṛṅgaverapurābhyāśe gaṅgākūle vyavasthitāḥ //

This way, the king gravely lamented and woefully wailed for a long time, and submerged his self in an ocean of insurmountable grief and sorrows. Seeing the king lamenting and weeping, the minister (Sumantra) folded his hands and submitted (6), 'Oh king! I had taken Sri Ram, Sita and Laxman astride your chariot. They halted on the banks of river Ganges near Sringverpur (7).

गुहेन किञ्चिदानीतं फलमूलादिकं च यत्। स्पृष्ट्वा हस्तेन सम्प्रीत्या नाग्रहीद्विससर्ज तत्।। 8।।
वटक्षीरं समानाय्य गुहेन रघुनन्दनः। जटामुकुटमाबद्ध्य मामाह नृपते स्वयम्।। 9।।

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guhena kiñcidānītaṃ phalamūlādikaṃ ca yat /
spṛṣṭvā hastena samprītyā nāgrahīdvisasarja tat //
vaṭakṣīraḥ samānāyya guhena raghunandanaḥ /
jaṭāmukuṭamābaddhya māmāha nṛpate svayam //

The king of the Nishad (boatman) community, Guha, brought some fruits and edible roots etc., but Sri Ram did not eat them; he touched them and left them alone (8). After that, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) asked Guha to bring some milk (sap) of the banyan tree, matted his hairs to form a crown over his head (like a hermit), and then he said to me (9)—

सुमन्त्र ब्रूहि राजानां शोकस्तेऽस्तु न मत्कृते। साकेतादधिकं सौख्यं विपिने नो भविष्यति।। 10।।
मातुर्मे वन्दनं ब्रूहि शोकं त्यजतु मत्कृते। आश्वासयतु राजानं वृद्धं शोकपरिप्लुतम्।। 11।।

sumantra brūhi rājānāṃ śokaste'stu na matkṛte /
sāketādadhikaṃ saukhyaṃ vipine no bhaviṣyati //
māturme vandanaṃ brūhi śokaṃ tyajatu matkṛte /
āśvāsayatu rājānaṃ vṛddhaṃ śokapariplutam //

'Oh Sumantra! Tell the king not to grieve or feel sorry for us. We shall get greater comfort in the forest as compared to Ayodhya (10). Say our Pranam (respects) to the mother also and ask her to stop worrying or feeling sorrowful for us. The king is old and extremely agitated, distressed and overwhelmed by anguish and grief at our separation—so, console him, comfort him with proper and tender care' (11).

सीता चाश्रुपरीताक्षी मामाह नृपसत्तम। दुःखगद्गदया वाचा रामं किंचिदवेक्षती।। 12।।
साष्टाङ्गं प्रणिपातं मे ब्रूहि श्वश्र्वोः पदाम्बुजे। इति प्ररुदती सीता गता किञ्चिदवाङ्मुखी।। 13।।
ततस्तेऽश्रुपरीताक्षा नावमारुरुहुस्तदा। यावद्गङ्गां समुत्तीर्य गतास्तावदहं स्थितः।। 14।।

sītā cāśruparītākṣī māmāha nṛpasattama /
duḥkhagadgadayā vācā rāmaṃ kiñcidavekṣatī //
sāṣṭāṅga praṇipātaṃ me brūhi śvaśrvoḥ padāmbuje /
iti prarudatī sītā gatā kiñcidavāṅmukhī //
tataste'śruparītākṣā nāvamāruruhustadā /
yāvadgaṅgāṃ samuttīrya gatāstāvadahaṃ sthitaḥ //

Oh the best amongst kings! After that, Sita kept glancing at Sri Ram and said to me with tearful eyes and a voice chocked with

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sorrowful emotions (12), 'Tell my due respects to my two mothers-in-law'. Saying this, she lowered her head and went away from there weeping and sobbing (13). Then all of them boarded the boat with tears welling up in their eyes. I stood there till the time they had crossed the river to the other side (14).

ततो दुःखेन महता पुनरेवाहमागतः। ततो रुदन्ती कौसल्या राजानमिदमब्रवीत्।। 15।।
कैकेय्यै प्रियभार्यायै प्रसन्नो दत्तवान्वरम्। त्वं राज्यं देहि तस्यैव मत्पुत्रः किं विवासितः।। 16।।
कृत्वा त्वमेव तत्सर्वमिदानीं किं नु रोदिषि। कौसल्यावचनं श्रुत्वा क्षते स्पृष्ट इवाग्निना।। 17।।

tato duḥkhena mahatā punarevāhamāgataḥ /
tato rudantī kausalyā rājanamidamabravīt //
kaikeyyai priyabhāryāyai prasanno dattavānvaram /
tvaṃ rājyaṃ dehi tasyaiva matputraḥ kiṃ vivāsitaḥ //
kṛtvā tvameva tatsarvamidānīṃ kiṃ nu rodiṣi /
kausalyāvacanaṃ śrutvā kṣate spṛṣṭa ivāgninā //

Then I started back from there and have reached here somehow full of great anguish, a heavy heart and with great difficulty'. Kaushalya, who was weeping, said to the king in a sarcastic tone, (15), 'Oh king! Even if you had been pleased with your beloved Kaikeyi and gave her the boon of giving her son (Bharat) the kingdom, but say, why did you give exile to my son? (16). And after doing all this mischief yourself, why do you cry?' Hearing these taunting words of Kaushalya, the king was tormented beyond redemption as if live fire had touched a raw wound (17).

पुनः शोकाश्रुपूर्णाक्षः कौसल्यामिदमब्रवीत्। दुःखेन म्रियमाणं मां किं पुनर्दुःखयस्यलम्।। 18।।
इदानीमेव मे प्राणा उत्क्रमिष्यन्ति निश्चयः। शप्तोऽहं बाल्यभावेन केनचिन्मुनिना पुरा।। 19।।

punaḥ śokāśrupūrṇākṣaḥ kausalyāmidamabravīt /
duḥkhena mriyamāṇaṃ māṃ kiṃ punarduḥkhayasyalam //
idānīmeva me prāṇā utkramiṣyanti niścayaḥ /
śapto'haṃ bālyabhāvena kenacinmuninā purā //

The king then replied to Kaushalya with tearful eyes, 'I am already dying (i.e. extremely tormented and tortured) due to anguish and grief, why do you torment and pour scorn at me further? What is the benefit of doing it? (18). There is no doubt that my life is about to leave this body (i.e. I am just about to die). In an earlier time, a sage had cursed me due to my own foolishness and misdemeanors (19).

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पुराहं यौवने दृप्तश्चापबाणधरो निशि। अचरं मृगयासक्तो नद्यास्तीरे महावने।। 20।।
तत्रार्धरात्रसमये मुनिः कश्चित्तृषार्दितः। पिपासार्दितयोः पित्रोर्जलमानेतुमुद्यतः।
अपूरयज्जले कुम्भं तदा शब्दोऽभवन्महान्।। 21।।

purāhaṃ yauvane dṛptaścāpabāṇadharo niśi /
acaraṃ mṛgayāsakto nadyāstīre mahāvane //
tatrārdharātrasamaye muniḥ kaścittṛṣārditaḥ /
pipāsārditayoḥ pitrorjalamānetumudyataḥ /
apūrayajjale kumbhaṃ tadā śabdo'bhavanmahān //

[Dashrath then narrated that old incident to Kaushalya.] Once, being wild due to youthful arrogance, I was wandering near the banks of a river near a dense forest in the night with a bow and arrow in hand looking for a game to hunt (20). At around midnight, some hermit had dipped his pot in the water to take it to quench the thirst of his father and mother; the pot made a great gurgling sound of water filling into it (21).

गजः पिबति पानीयमिति मत्वा महानिशि। बाणं धनुषि सन्धाय शब्दवेधिनमक्षिपम्।। 22।।
हा हतोऽस्मीति तत्राभूच्छब्दो मानुषसूचकः। कस्यापि न कृतो दोषो मया केन हतो विधे।। 23।।

gajaḥ pibati pānīyamiti matvā mahāniśi /
bāṇaṃ dhanuṣi sandhāya śabdavedhinamakṣipam //
hā hato'smīti tatrābhūcchabdo mānuṣasūcakaḥ /
kasyāpi na kṛto doṣo mayā kena hato vidhe //

Thinking that some elephant was drinking water in that dark night, I mounted an arrow which could home into the origin of the sound, and shot it (22). When the arrow struck, there was the agonised shocked voice of a human, exclaiming, 'Alas! I am killed. Oh creator! I had not harmed anyone in anyway—than why has someone killed me? (23).

प्रतीक्षते मां माता च पिता च जलकाङ्क्षया। तच्छ्रुत्वा भयसन्त्रस्तस्ततोऽहं पौरुषं वचः।। 24।।
शनैर्गत्वाथ तत्पार्श्वं स्वामिन् दशरथोऽस्म्यहम्। अजानता मया विद्धस्त्रातुमर्हसि मां मुने।। 25।।

pratīkṣate māṃ mātā ca pitā ca jalakāṅkṣayā /
tacchrutvā bhayasantrastastato'haṃ pauruṣaṃ vacaḥ //
śanairgatvātha tatpārśvaṃ svāmin daśaratho'smyaham /
ajānatā mayā viddhastrātumarhasi māṃ mune //

Alas! My mother and father are waiting for me, expecting water to

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drink'. Hearing this human voice, I was greatly perturbed and scared (that I have committed a horrible sin), and went stealthily to him and said, 'Oh Lord! I am Dashrath. I have shot this arrow inadvertently. Oh sage! Please save me (and excuse me for my un-intentioned error and horrible act)' (24-25).

इत्युक्त्वा पादयोस्तस्य पतितो गद्गदाक्षरः। तदा मामाह स मुनिर्मा भैषीर्नृपसत्तम।। 26।।
ब्रह्महत्या स्पृशेन्न त्वां वैश्योऽहं तपसि स्थितः। पितरौ मां प्रतीक्षेते क्षुत्तृड्भ्यां परिपीडितौ।। 27।।

ityuktvā pādayostasya patitā gadgadākṣaraḥ /
tadā māmāha sa munirmā bhaiṣīrnṛpasattama //
brahmahatyā spṛśenna tvāṃ vaiśyo'haṃ tapasi sthitaḥ /
pitarau māṃ pratīkṣete kṣuttṛḍbhyāṃ paripīḍitau //

Saying this, I fell down at his feet with a chocked voice of regret. Then that hermit told me, 'Oh the exalted king! Don't be afraid (26). You shall not be tormented by the sin of killing a Brahmin because I am a Vaishya by birth who is engaged in austerities and penances (Tapa). My mother and father must be waiting for me anxiously because of their hunger and thirst (27).

तयोस्त्वमुदकं देहि शीघ्रमेवाविचारयन्। न चेत्त्वां भस्मसात्कुर्यात्पिता मे यदि कुप्यति।। 28।।
जलं दत्त्वा तु तौ नत्वा कृतं सर्वं निवेदय। शल्यमुद्धर मे देहात्प्राणांस्त्यक्ष्यामि पीडितः।।29।।

tayostvamudakaṃ dehi śīghramevāvicārayan /
na cettvāṃ bhasmasātkuryātpitā me yadi kupyati //
jalaṃ datvā tu tau natvā kṛtaṃ sarvaṃ nivedaya /
śalyamuddhara me dehātprāṇāṁstyakṣyāmi pīḍitaḥ //

Therefore, you should make haste and go give them water, because otherwise if my father gets angry, he will reduce you to ashes (28). After giving him water and bowing before him, tell him about your misdeeds. I am under immense pain—remove this arrow which is stuck in my body, for I soon wish to die' (29).

इत्युक्तो मुनिना शीघ्रं बाणमुत्पाट्य देहतः। सजलं कलशं धृत्वा गतोऽहं यत्र दम्पती।। 30।।
अतिवृद्धावन्धदृशौ क्षुत्पिपासार्दितौ निशि। नायाति सलिलं गृह्य पुत्रः किं वात्र कारणम्।।31।।

ityukto muninā śīghraṃ bāṇamutpāṭya dehataḥ /
sajalaṃ kalaśaṃ dhṛtvā gato'haṃ yatra dampatī //
ativṛddhāvandhadṛśau kṣutpipāsārditau niśi /
nāyāti salilaṃ gṛhya putraḥ kiṃ vātra kāraṇam //

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When the hermit had said so, I extracted the embedded arrow from his body immediately, took the pot of water and went hastily to the place where his parents were waiting for him (30). At that moment, they were agitated and anxious with worries—'We are very old, handicapped by our vision (i.e. we are blind), and greatly distressed due to hunger and thirst. What is the reason that our son has not come back with the water during the night till now (31).

अनन्यगतिकौ वृद्धौ शोच्यौ तृट्परिपीडितौ। आवामुपेक्षते किं वा भक्तिमानावयोः सुतः।। 32।।
इति चिन्ताव्याकुलौ तौ मत्पादन्यासजं ध्वनिम्। श्रुत्वा प्राह पिता पुत्र किं विलम्बः कृतस्त्वया।।33।।

ananyagatikau vṛddhau śocyau tṛṭparipīḍitau /
āvāmupekṣate kiṃ vā bhaktimānāvayoḥ sutaḥ //
iti cintāvyākulau tau matpādanyāsajaṃ dhvanim /
śrutvā prāha pitā putra kiṃ vilambaḥ kṛtastvayā //

We have no other support or help; we are old, in a pitiable state and greatly tormented by extreme thirst. What is the reason that our devoted son has been negligent towards us?' (32). Just at that instant, hearing the sound of my footsteps, the father asked, 'Oh son! Why are you so late today? (33).

देह्यावयोः सुपानीयं पिब त्वमपि पुत्रक। इत्येवं लपतोर्भीत्या सकाशमगमं शनैः।। 34।।
पादयोः प्रणिपत्याहमब्रवं विनयान्वितः। नाहं पुत्रस्त्वयोध्याया राजा दशरथोऽस्म्यहम्।।35।।

dehyāvayoḥ supānīyaṃ piba tvamapi putraka /
ityevaṃ lapatorbhītyā sakāśamagamaṃ śanaiḥ //
pādayoḥ praṇipatyāhamabravaṃ vinayānvitaḥ /
nāhaṃ putrastvayodhyāyā rājā daśaratho'smyaham //

Come, bring the clean water for us to drink and you drink it yourself with us'. When he said so, I hesitantly and slowly moved closer to him, fearing for what was to come (34). There I bowed my head at his feet and said politely, 'I am not your son but the king of Ayodhya, Dashrath (35).

पापोऽहं मृगयासक्तो रात्रौ मृगविहिंसकः। जलावतारादूरेऽहं स्थित्वा जलगतं ध्वनिम्।। 36।।
श्रुत्वाहं शब्दवेधित्वादेकं बाणमथात्यजम्। हतोऽस्मीति ध्वनिं श्रुत्वा भयात्तत्राहमागतः।।37।।

pāpo'haṃ mṛgayāsakto rātrau mṛgavihiṁsakaḥ /
jalāvatārāddūre'haṃ sthitvā jalagataṃ dhvanim //

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śrutvāhaṃ śabdavedhitvādekaṃ bāṇamathātyajam /
hato'smīti dhvaniṃ śrutvā bhayāttatrāhamāgataḥ //

I am so sinful that I roamed around in the forest hunting animals during the night. Because I was far away from the banks of the river, when I heard the sound coming from the river-side, I mistook it to be a deer (or some other game drinking water) (36), I shot an arrow directed at the spot from where the sound emanated. But when I heard someone say 'I am killed' in a human voice, I was terrified and reached the spot most fearfully and full of regrets. (I was scared at the possibility of having killed a man by error) (37).

जटां विकीर्य पतितं दृष्ट्वाहं मुनिदारकम्। भीतो गृहीत्वा तत्पादौ रक्ष रक्षेति चाब्रवम्।। 38।।
मा भैषीरिति मां प्राह ब्रह्महत्याभयं न ते। मत्पित्रोः सलिलं दत्त्वा नत्वा प्रार्थय जीवितम्।।39।।
इत्युक्तो मुनिना तेन ह्यागतो मुनिहिंसकः। रक्षेतां मां दयायुक्तौ युवां हि शरणागतम्।।40।।

jaṭāṃ vikīrya patitaṃ dṛṣṭvāhaṃ munidārakam /
bhīto gṛhītvā tatpādau rakṣa rakṣeti cābravam //
mā bhaiṣīriti māṃ prāha brahmahatyābhayaṃ na te /
matpitroḥ salilaṃ dattvā natvā prārthaya jīvitam //
ityukto muninā tena hyāgato munihiṁsakaḥ /
rakṣetāṃ māṃ dayāyuktau yuvāṃ hi śaraṇāgatam //

Reaching the spot, when I saw a hermit's son lying on the ground with his tresses spread all around him, I was terrified no end, and caught hold of his feet and said, 'Save me' (38). Then he assured me, saying 'Don't be afraid. You will not have the fear of killing a Brahmin. Go and let my father and mother have water to drink, bow before them and plead for your life' (39). On the advise of the hermit's son, this 'hermit's slayer' has come to you. Both of you are very merciful and compassionate. I have come to seek refuge at your feet; you should save and protect me, and forgive me for my misadventure and inadvertent error' (40).

इति श्रुत्वा तु दुःखार्तौ विलप्य बहु शोच्य तम्। पतितौ नौ सुतो यत्र नय तत्राविलम्बयन्।। 41।।
ततो नीतौ सुतो यत्र मया तौ वृद्धदम्पती। स्पृष्ट्वा सुतं तौ हस्ताभ्यां बहुशोऽथ विलेपतुः।।42।।

iti śrutvā tu duḥkhārtau vilapya bahu śocya tam /
patitau nau suto yatra naya tatrāvilambayan //
tato nītau suto yatra mayā tau vṛddhadampatī /
spṛṣṭvā sutaṃ tau hastābhyāṃ bahuśo'tha vilepatuḥ //

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Hearing this shocking news and overcome with surging grief and tremendous outrage, the old couple fell to the ground and mourned woefully, 'Take us immediately to the place where our son is' (41). Then I took those elderly couple to the place where their son lay on the ground near the river. They touched him with their hands and lamented and wailed miserably (42)—

हाहेति क्रन्दमानौ तौ पुत्रपुत्रेत्यवोचताम्। जलं देहीति पुत्रेति किमर्थं न ददास्यलम्।। 43।।
ततो मामूचतुः शीघ्रं चितिं रचय भूपते। मया तदैव रचिता चितिस्तत्र निवेशिताः।
त्रयस्तत्राग्निरुत्सृष्टो दग्धास्ते त्रिदिवं ययुः।। 44।।

hāheti krandamānau tau putraputretyavocatām /
jalaṃ dehīti putreti kimarthaṃ na dadāsyalam //
tato māmūcatuḥ śīghraṃ citiṃ racaya bhūpate /
mayā tadaiva racitā citistatra niveśitāḥ /
trayastatrāgnirutsṛṣṭo dagdhāste tridivaṃ yayuḥ //

Crying 'Oh son', they lamented most woefully and heart-renderingly, 'son, give us water. Why don't you give us water with your own hands today?' (43). Then they said to me, 'Oh king! Make a funeral pile immediately'. I did it soon as ordered. The three of them climbed it, and when the fire was lit, they got reduced to ashes and (their souls) went to the heaven (44).

तत्र वृद्धः पिता प्राह त्वमप्येवं भविष्यसि। पुत्रशोकेन मरणं प्राप्स्यसे वचनान्मम।। 45।।
स इदानीं मम प्राप्तः शापकालोऽनिवारितः। इत्युक्त्वा विललापाथ राजा शोकसमाकुलः।। 46।।
हा राम पुत्र हा सीते हा लक्ष्मण गुणाकर। त्वद्वियोगादहं प्राप्तो मृत्युं कैकेयिसम्भवम्।। 47।।

tatra vṛddhaḥ pitā prāha tvamapyevaṃ bhaviṣyasi /
putraśokena maraṇaṃ prāpsyase vacanānmama //
sa idānīṃ mama prāptaḥ śāpakālo'nivāritaḥ /
ityuktvā vilalāpātha rājā śokasamākulaḥ //
hā rāma putra hā sīte hā lakṣmaṇa guṇākara /
tvadviyogādahaṃ prāpto mṛtyuṃ kaikeyisambhavam //

At that time, the elderly father had cursed me, saying—'You too will have the same fate. You too would die due to the grief, agonies and sorrows associated with separation from your son' (45). That inviolable curse has presented itself to me today'. Saying this, the king started gravely lamenting and mourning remorsefully (46)—'Oh son

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Ram! Oh Sita! Oh virtuous Laxman! By the agony of your separation, I am dying a death presented to me, thanks to the courtesy of Kaikeyi' (47).

वदन्नेवं दशरथः प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा दिवं गतः। कौसल्या च सुमित्रा च तथान्या राजयोषितः।।48।।
चुक्रुशुश्च विलेपुश्च उरस्ताडनपूर्वकम्। वसिष्ठः प्रययौ तत्र प्रातर्मन्त्रिभिरावृतः।।49।।
तैलद्रोण्यां दशरथं क्षिप्त्वा दूतानथाब्रवीत्। गच्छत त्वरितं साश्वा युधाजिन्नगरं प्रति।।50।।

vadannevaṃ daśarathaḥ prāṇāṅstyaktvā divaṃ gataḥ /
kausalyā ca sumitrā ca tathānyā rājayoṣitaḥ //
cukruśuśca vilepuśca urastāḍanapūrvakam /
vasiṣṭhaḥ prayayau tatra prātarmantribhirāvṛtaḥ //
tailadroṇyāṃ daśarathaṃ kṣiptvā dūtānathābravīt /
gacchata tvaritaṃ sāśvā yudhājinnagaraṃ prati //

Mourning, lamenting and grieving thus, Dashrath left his mortal coil and went to the heaven. At that moment, Kaushalya, Sumitra and other queens started beating their chests in grief, grieving, mourning, wailing and weeping bitterly. At the crack of dawn, sage Vashistha came there accompanied by the royal ministers (48-49). They kept Dashrath's body submerged in a tub (literally, a boat) filled with oil (to prevent decomposition), summoned royal messengers and ordered them, 'Ride on swift horses and go forthwith to the capital of Yudhajit (who was the maternal uncle of Bharat) (50).

तत्रास्ते भरतः श्रीमाञ्छत्रुघ्नसहितः प्रभुः। उच्यतां भरतः शीघ्रमागच्छेति ममाज्ञया।।51।।
अयोध्यां प्रति राजानं कैकेयीं चापि पश्यतु। इत्युक्तास्त्वरितं दूता गत्वा भरतमातुलम्।।52।।

tatrāste bharataḥ śrīmāñchatrughnasahitaḥ prabhuḥ /
ucyatāṃ bharataḥ śīghramāgaccheti mamājñayā //
ayodhyāṃ prati rājānaṃ kaikeyīṃ cāpi paśyatu /
ityuktvāstaritaṃ dūtā gatvā bharatamātulam //

There, Bharat lives with Shatrughan. Go and tell them my command that they should come back to Ayodhya immediately (51) and meet Dashrath and Kaikeyi'. When sage Vashistha had instructed them thus, the messengers rushed to Bharat's maternal uncle's place (52).

युधाजितं प्रणम्योचुर्भरतं सानुजं प्रति। वसिष्ठस्त्वाब्रवीद्राजन् भरतः सानुजः प्रभुः।।53।।
शीघ्रमागच्छतु पुरीमयोध्यामविचारयन्। इत्याज्ञप्तोऽथ भरतस्त्वरितं भयविह्वलः।।54।।

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आययौ गुरुणादिष्टः सह दूतैस्तु सानुजः। राज्ञो वा राघवस्यापि दुःखं किञ्चिदुपस्थितम्।।55।।

yudhājitaṃ praṇamyocurbharataṃ sānujaṃ prati /
vasiṣṭhastvābravīdrājan bharataḥ sānujaḥ prabhuḥ //
śīghramāgacchatu purīmayodhyāmavicārayan /
ityājñapto'tha bharatastvaritaṃ bhayavihvalaḥ //
āyayau guruṇādiṣṭhaḥ saha dūtaistu sānujaḥ /
rājño vā rāghavasyāpi duḥkhaṃ kiñcidupasthitam //

They bowed before Yudhajit, Bharat and his younger brother Shatrughan, and said (53), 'Oh king! Sage Vashistha has sent an urgent word for you (meant for Bharat) that along with his younger brother Shatrughan, he should immediately come back to Ayodhya without thinking twice'. Hearing this command of his Guru, Bharat was terrified and overcome with fear. He wondered whether some calamitous event, some grave problem or serious danger has presented itself suddenly before the king (Dashrath) or Raghav (Sri Ram) that they have called him in such haste, and so he urgently departed from there along with Shatrughan and the messengers (54-55).

[Note :—Bharat did not have any premonition of the calamitous events unfolding at Ayodhya, nor did he have the time to perform elaborate rituals such as bathing Shiv Lingams with milk, praying for welfare in Ayodhya, etc. as has been made out by Tulsidas in his epic rendering of the legendary story in 'Ram Charit Manas' in its Ayodhya Kand.]

इति चिन्तापरो मार्गे चिन्तयन्नगरं ययौ। नगरं भ्रष्टलक्ष्मीकं जनसम्बाधवर्जितम्।।56।।
उत्सवैश्च परित्यक्तं दृष्ट्वा चिन्तापरोऽभवत्। प्रविश्य राजभवनं राजलक्ष्मीविवर्जितम्।।57।।
अपश्यत्कैकेयीं तत्र एकामेवासने स्थिताम्। ननाम शिरसा पादौ मातुर्भक्तिसमन्वितः।।58।।

iti cintāparo mārge cintayannagaraṃ yayau /
nagaraṃ bhraṣṭalakṣmīkaṃ janasambādhavarjitam //
utsavaiśca parityaktaṃ dṛṣṭvā cintāparo'bhavat /
praviśya rājabhavanaṃ rājalakṣmīvivarjitam //
apaśyatkaikeyīṃ tatra ekāmevāsane sthitām /
nanāma śirasā pādau māturbhaktisamanvitaḥ //

He was very worried and anxious throughout the duration of his journey to Ayodhya. Having arrived in the city, he found it lacking in its usual grandeur, pomp and majesty, almost desolate of any vibrant life (as everyone preferred to stay indoors and the usual hustle and bustle associated with a busy city were missing), and lacked its usual

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festivities. Seeing all these ominous signs, he was very perplexed and worried. Inside the royal palace, he observed there was no usual royal ambience and pomp; there was a deathly and haunting calm and Kaikeyi was sitting alone. Seeing his mother, he affectionately and devotedly bowed his head at her feet (56-58).

आगतं भरतं दृष्ट्वा कैकेयी प्रेमसम्भ्रमात्। उत्थायालिङ्ग्य रभसा स्वाङ्कमारोप्य संस्थिता।। 59।।
मूर्ध्न्यवघ्राय पप्रच्छ कुशलं स्वकुलस्य सा। पिता मे कुशली भ्राता माता च शुभलक्षणा।।60।।

āgataṃ bharataṃ dṛṣṭvā kaikeyī premasambhramāt /
utthāyāliṅgya rabhasā svāṅkamāropya saṁsthitā //
mūrdhnyavaghrāya papraccha kuśalaṃ svakulasya sā /
pitā me kuśali bhrātā mātā ca śubhalakṣaṇā //

Seeing that Bharat has arrived, mother Kaikeyi quickly lifted him affectionately, embraced him and made him sit on her laps (59). She smelled his head as a token of welcome and affection and asked him about the welfare of her own clan and family members back home. She asked, 'Are my father, brother and the virtuous mother alright? (60).

दिष्ट्या त्वमद्य कुशली मया दृष्टोऽसि पुत्रक। इति पृष्टः स भरतो मात्रा चिन्ताकुलेन्द्रियः।। 61।।
दूयमानेन मनसा मातरं समपृच्छत। मातः पिता मे कुत्रास्ते एका त्वमिह संस्थिता।। 62।।
त्वया विना न मे तातः कदाचिद्रहसि स्थितः। इदानीं दृश्यते नैव कुत्र तिष्ठति मे वद।।63।।

diṣṭyā tvamadya kuśalī mayā dṛṣṭo'si putraka /
iti pṛṣṭaḥ sa bharato mātrā cintākulendriyaḥ //
dūyamānena manasā mātaraṃ samapṛcchata /
mātaḥ pitā me kutrāste ekā tvamiha saṁsthitā //
tvayā vinā na me tātaḥ kadācidrahasi sthitaḥ /
idānīṃ dṛśyate naiva kutra tiṣṭhati me vada //

Son, I am very fortunate and happy to see you today'. When the mother enquired thus, Bharat retorted with a worried mind and asked her instead, 'Mother, where is my father that you are sitting here alone? (61-62). Mother, the father never stayed alone without you, but he is not visible anywhere now. Say, where is he? (63).

अदृष्ट्वा पितरं मेऽद्य भयं दुःखं च जायते। अथाह कैकेयी पुत्रं किं दुःखेन तवानघ।। 64।।
या गतिर्धर्मशीलानामश्वमेधादियाजिनाम्। तां गतिं गतवानद्य पिता ते पितृवत्सल।। 65।।

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adṛṣṭvā pitaraṃ me'dya bhayaṃ duḥkhaṃ ca jāyate /
athāha kaikeyī putra kiṃ duḥkhena tavānagha //
yā gatirdharmaśīlānāmaśvamedhādiyājinām /
tāṃ gatiṃ gatavānadya pitā te pitṛvatsala //

I am unable to see my father anywhere; I have become very upset and afraid'. Then Kaikeyi replied, 'Oh the sinless and pure-hearted one! What is there for you to feel sorry about? (64). Oh the one who loves his father so much! The end which is destined for a noble and virtuous person who performs the various religious sacrifices, such as a 'horse sacrifice' etc., has been attained by your father (i.e. he has gone to the heaven)' (65).

तच्छ्रुत्वा निपपातोर्व्यां भरतः शोकविह्वलः। हा तात क्व गतोऽसि त्वं त्यक्त्वा मां वृजिनार्णवे।।66।।
असमर्प्यैव रामाय राज्ञे मां क्व गतोऽसि भोः। इति विलपितं पुत्रं पतितं मुक्तमूर्धजम्।।67।।
उत्थाप्यामृज्य नयने कैकेयी पुत्रमब्रवीत्। समाश्वसिहि भद्रं ते सर्वं सम्पादितं मया।।68।।

tacchrutvā nipapātorvyāṃ bharataḥ śokavihvalaḥ /
hā tāta kva gato'si tvaṃ tyaktvā māṃ vṛjinārṇave //
asamarpyaiva rāmāya rājñe māṃ kva gato'si bhoḥ /
iti vilapitaṃ putraṃ patitaṃ muktamūrdhajam //
utthāpyāmṛjya nayane kaikeyī putramabravīt /
samāśvasihi bhadraṃ te sarvaṃ sampāditaṃ mayā //

As soon as he heard this, Bharat was overwhelmed with outrage, surging grief and unbound sorrows, and he fell to the ground. He lamented mournfully—'Oh dear father! Leaving me behind in an ocean of sorrows and anguish, where have you gone? (66). Alas! Even without handing me over to Lord Ram for custody and care, where have you gone?' Kaikeyi lifted her son who was lamenting most remorsefully and lay spread-eagled on the ground with disheveled hairs, wiped his tears, and tried to console and comfort him, saying, 'Son, have courage and forbearance. Bless you with welfare! I have fixed everything for you (for your good, and you need not lament, feel remorseful or contrite)' (67-68).

तमाह भरतस्तातो म्रियमाणः किमब्रवीत्। तमाह कैकेयी देवी भरतं भयवर्जिता।।69।।
हा राम राम सीतेति लक्ष्मणेति पुनः पुनः। विलपन्नेव सुचिरं देहं त्यक्त्वा दिवं ययौ।।70।।
तामाह भरतो हेऽम्ब रामः सन्निहितो न किम्। तदानीं लक्ष्मणो वापि सीता वा कुत्र ते गताः।।71।।

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tamāha bharatastāto mriyamāṇaḥ kimabravīt /
tamāha kaikeyī devī bharataṃ bhayavarjitā //
hā rāma rāma sīteti lakṣmaṇeti punaḥ punaḥ /
vilapanneva suciraṃ dehaṃ tyaktvā divaṃ yayau //
tāmāha bharato he'mba rāmaḥ sannihito na kim /
tadānīṃ lakṣmaṇo vāpi sītā vā kutra te gatāḥ //

Bharat asked, 'What did the king say at the time of his death?' At this, Devi Kaikeyi said fearlessly (without any remorse or regrets) (69), 'He kept on saying 'Oh Ram, Oh Sita, Oh Laxman' for a long time before making his exit for the heavens' (70). Bharat asked, 'Oh Mother, then were Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita not with him at that time? Where did they go at the time of his death; where were they?' (71).

कैकेय्युवाच

रामस्य यौवराज्यार्थं पिता ते सम्भ्रमः कृतः। तव राज्यप्रदानाय तदाहं विघ्नमाचरम्।। 72।।
राज्ञा दत्तं हि मे पूर्वं वरदेन वरद्वयम्। याचितं तदिदानीं मे तयोरेकेन तेऽखिलम्।। 73।।
राज्यं रामस्य चैकेन वनवासो मुनिव्रतम्। ततः सत्यपरो राजा राज्यं दत्त्वा तवैव हि।। 74।।
रामं सम्प्रेषयामास वनमेव पिता तव। सीताप्यनुगता रामं पातिव्रत्यमुपाश्रिता।। 75।।

kaikeyyuvāca

rāmasya yauvarājyārthaṃ pitā te sambhramaḥ kṛtaḥ /
tava rājyapradānāya tadāhaṃ vighnamācaram //
rajñā dattaṃ hi me pūrvaṃ varadena varadvayam /
yācitaṃ tadidānīṃ me tayorekena te'khilam //
rājyaṃ rāmasya caikena vanavāso munivratam /
tataḥ satyaparo rājā rājyaṃ dattvā tavaiva hi //
rāmaṃ sampreṣayāmāsa vanameva pitā tava /
sītāpyanugatā rāmaṃ pātivratyamupāśritā //

Kaikeyi said, 'Your father had made preparations for making Sri Ram a prince regent. At that time, I created an obstacle in it in order to give the reign of the kingdom to you (72). In an earlier time, the king was pleased with me and had promised to grant me two boons. Out of these two, by one I had asked the entire kingdom for you, and by the second I had asked for Sri Ram's exile to the forest where he would be observing all the austerities and live a life befitting a hermit. That is why your truthful father, the king, has given you the kingdom and has sent Sri Ram to exile in the forest. Sita, who is loyal

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to her vows as a faithful and loyal wife, also followed him to the forest (73-75).

सौभ्रात्रं दर्शयन्राममनुयातोऽपि लक्ष्मणः। वनं गतेषु सर्वेषु राजा तानेव चिन्तयन्।। 76।।
प्रलपन् राम रामेति ममार नृपसत्तमः। इति मातुर्वचः श्रुत्वा वज्राहत इव द्रुमः।। 77।।
पपात भूमौ निःसंज्ञस्तं दृष्ट्वा दुःखिता तदा। कैकेयी पुनरप्याह वत्स शोकेन किं तव।। 78।।

saubhrātraṃ darśayanrāmamanuyāto'pi lakṣmaṇaḥ /
vanaṃ gateṣu sarveṣu rājā tāneva cintayan //
pralapan rāma rāmeti mamāra nṛpasattamaḥ /
iti māturvacaḥ śrutvā vajrāhata iva drumaḥ //
papāta bhūmau niḥsaṁjñastaṃ dṛṣṭvā duḥkhitā tadā /
kaikeyī punarapyāha vatsa śokena kiṃ tava //

Likewise, Laxman expressed his brotherly love by following Sri Ram. Since they had all gone to the forest, the king had wailed 'Ram, Ram' in their memory and left his body (died)'. Hearing these stern, heartless and remorseless words of the mother, Bharat was shell-shocked and confounded beyond belief, and he fell down on the ground like a tree struck by a bolt of lightening. Seeing his miserable condition, Kaikeyi reiterated once again—'Oh son! Why do you lament? (76-78).

राज्ये महति सम्प्राप्ते दुःखस्यावसरः कुतः। इति ब्रुवन्तीमालोक्य मातरं प्रदहन्निव।। 79।।
असम्भाष्यासि पापे मे घोरे त्वं भर्तृघातिनी। पापे त्वद्गर्भजातोऽहं पापवानस्मि साम्प्रतम्।
अहमग्निं प्रवेक्ष्यामि विषं वा भक्षयाम्यहम्।। 80।।
खड्गेन वाथ चात्मानं हत्वा यामि यमक्षयम्। भर्तृघातिनि दुष्टे त्वं कुम्भीपाकं गमिष्यसि।। 81।।

rājye mahati samprāpte duḥkhasyāvasaraḥ kutaḥ /
iti bruvantīmālokya mātaraṃ pradahanniva //
asambhāṣyāsi pāpe me ghore tvaṃ bhartṛghātinī /
pāpe tvadgarbhajāto'haṃ pāpavānasmi sāmpratam /
ahamagniṃ pravakṣyāmi viṣaṃ vā bhakṣayāmyaham //
khaḍgena vātha cātmānaṃ hatvā yāmi yamakṣayam /
bhartṛghātini duṣṭe tvaṃ kumbhīpākaṃ gamiṣyasi //

After having got a great kingdom, where is the cause of any sorrows or regrets?' Hearing the mother speak these words, Bharat burst out, seething with anger (79), 'Oh you sinner! You are not fit to talk to. Oh you cruel and merciless one! You are the murderer of your

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own husband. Oh you sinful one! Having taken birth from your womb, I too am evidently a great sinner. I will either enter the fire and burn myself, or else consume poison (80), or commit suicide by stabbing myself with a dagger (or a sword) and go to hell. Oh the harmer (killer) of your husband! Oh you wicked one! You too shall fall in the 'Kumbhipak' (the most horrible form of) hell for your outrageous, most contemptible and reprehensible deeds' (81).

इति निर्भर्त्स्य कैकेयीं कौसल्याभवनं ययौ। सापि तं भरतं दृष्ट्वा मुक्तकण्ठा रुरोद ह।। 82।।
पादयोः पतितस्तस्या भरतोऽपि तदारुदत्। आलिङ्ग्य भरतं साध्वी राममाता यशस्विनी।
कृशातिदीनवदना साश्रुनेत्रेदमब्रवीत्।। 83।।

iti nirbhartsya kaikeyīṃ kausalyābhavanaṃ yayau /
sāpi taṃ bharataṃ dṛṣṭvā muktakaṇṭhā ruroda ha //
pādayoḥ patitastasyā bharato'pi tadārudat /
āliṅgya bharataṃ sādhvī rāmamātā yaśasvinī /
kṛśātidīnavadanā sāśrunetredamabravīt //

Strongly scolding and reproachfully taking to task Kaikeyi in this manner, he went crestfallen to the palace of Kaushalya. As soon as she saw him, she began to weep bitterly in a heart rendering manner (82). Then Bharat too fell at her feet and started crying inconsolably. Embracing him, Sri Ram's glorious mother, who had become very weak and was in a pitiful condition, filled her eyes with tears and said (83)—

पुत्र त्वयि गते दूरमेवं सर्वमभूदिदम्। उक्तं मात्रा श्रुतं सर्वं त्वया ते मातृचेष्टितम्।। 84।।
पुत्रः सभार्यो वनमेव यातः सलक्ष्मणो मे रघुरामचन्द्रः।
चीराम्बरो बद्धजटाकलापः सन्त्यज्य मां दुःखसमुद्रमग्नाम्।। 85।।

putra tvayi gate dūramevaṃ sarvamabhūdidam /
uktaṃ mātrā śrutaṃ sarvaṃ tvayā te mātṛceṣṭitam //
putraḥ sabhāryo vanameva yātaḥ salakṣmaṇo me raghurāmacandraḥ /
cīrāmbaro baddhajaṭākalāpaḥ santyajya māṃ duḥkhasamudramagnām //

'Oh son! All these misfortunes that have happened here after you had gone away to your uncle's place, you surely must have heard all about the misdemeanors and misdeeds of your mother from her own mouth (84). My son Sri Ram, the most exalted in Raghu's clan and who was accompanied by his wife Sita and brother Laxman, attired himself in clothes made from barks of trees, matted his hair and went

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to the forest, leaving me submerged in an ocean of unconquering grief and sorrows' (85).

हा राम हा मे रघुवंशनाथ जातोऽसि मे त्वं परतः परात्मा।
तथापि दुःखं न जहाति मां वै विधिर्बलीयानिति मे मनीषा।। 86।।

hā rāma hā me raghuvaṁśanātha jāto'si me tvaṃ parataḥ parātmā /
tathāpi duḥkhaṃ na jahāti māṃ vai vidhirbalīyāniti me manīṣā //

(She cried—) 'Oh Ram! Oh my Raghuvanshmani (meaning, the gem of Raghu's clan)! You—who are the personification of the supreme cosmic soul called Parmatma himself—have taken birth from my womb. But still sorrows and miseries have not stopped dogging me. This has led me to think (or conclude) that destiny (or creator) is more powerful' (86).

स एवं भरतो वीक्ष्य विलपन्तीं भृशं शुचा। पादौ गृहीत्वा ग्राहेदं शृणु मातर्वचो मम।। 87।।
कैकेय्या यत्कृतं कर्म रामराज्याभिषेचने। अन्यद्वा यदि जानामि सा मया नोदिता यदि।। 88।।

sa evaṃ bharato vīkṣya vilapantīṃ bhṛśaṃ śucā /
pādau gṛhītvā prāhedaṃ śṛṇu mātarvaco mama //
kaikeyyā yatkṛtaṃ karma rāmarājyābhiṣecane /
anyadvā yadi jānāmi sā mayā noditā yadi //

Bharat saw her grieving remorsefully, and he caught hold of her feet and said, 'Oh mother! Listen to me (87). Whatever Kaikeyi had done at the time of Sri Ram's anointment, or whatever else she has done or said—if I knew anything about it at all, if I had been aware of it, or if it had my tacit support or consent of any kind, if I was a party to the conspiracy (88)—

पापं मेऽस्तु तदा मातर्ब्रह्महत्याशतोद्भवम्। हत्वा वसिष्ठं खड्गेन अरुन्धत्या समन्वितम्।। 89।।
भूयात्तत्पापमखिलं मम जानामि यद्यहम्। इत्येवं शपथं कृत्वा रुरोद भरतस्तदा।। 90।।

pāpaṃ me'stu tadā mātarbrahmahatyāśatodbhavam /
hatvā vasiṣṭhaṃ khaḍgena arundhatyā samanvitam //
bhūyāttatpāpamakhilaṃ mama jānāmi yadyaham /
ityevaṃ śapathaṃ kṛtvā ruroda bharatastadā //

Then, oh mother, let me be cursed by sins equivalent to a hundred murders of Brahmins. Or the sin which is begot by killing Guru Vashistha and his wife Arundhati by a sword should be cast upon me'. Making such an oath, Bharat burst out weeping uncontrollably (89-90).

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कौसल्या तमथालिङ्ग्य पुत्र जानामि मा शुचः। एतस्मिन्नन्तरे श्रुत्वा भरतस्य समागमम्।। 91।।
वसिष्ठो मन्त्रिभिः सार्धं प्रययौ राजमन्दिरम्। रुदन्तं भरतं दृष्ट्वा वसिष्ठः प्राह सादरम्।। 92।।

kausalyā tamathāliṅgya putra jānāmi mā śucaḥ /
etasminnantare śrutvā bharatasya samāgamam //
vasiṣṭho mantribhiḥ sārdhaṃ prayayau rājamandiram /
rudantaṃ bharataṃ dṛṣṭvā vasiṣṭhaḥ prāha sādaram //

Then Kaushalya clasped him to her bosom and reassured him, saying, 'Oh son! I know all this (that you are not guilty). You should not worry at all. (There is no misunderstanding with me—I know that you are not a party to all this evil design of your mother.)' At about that moment, hearing of Bharat's arrival, sage Vashistha came to the royal palace, accompanied by other ministers. Seeing Bharat weeping bitterly, he said to him (91-92)—

वृद्धो राजा दशरथो ज्ञानी सत्यपराक्रमः। भुक्त्वा मर्त्यसुखं सर्वमिष्ट्वा विपुलदक्षिणैः।। 93।।
अश्वमेधादिभिर्यज्ञैर्लब्ध्वा रामं सुतं हरिम्। अन्ते जगाम त्रिदिवं देवेन्द्रार्द्धासनं प्रभुः।। 94।।

vṛddho rājā daśaratho jñānī satyaparākramaḥ /
bhuktvā martyasukhaṃ sarvamiṣṭvā vipuladakṣiṇaiḥ //
aśvamedhādibhiryajñairlabdhvā rāmaṃ sutaṃ harim /
ante jagāma tridivaṃ devendrārddhāsanaṃ prabhuḥ //

'King Dashrath was old, wise, truthful, victorious and true to his vows. He has enjoyed all the comforts and fruits of taking birth as a human being, has propitiated the Lord by donating a lot of wealth and doing the Ashwamedh Yagya (horse sacrifice) and performing other religious rituals. As a consequence, he has obtained Lord Vishnu himself in the form of his son Sri Ram—after having got all these unique benefits, he has gone, in the end, to the heaven and has become authorised (eligible) to sit on one half of the throne of Indra (the king of Gods) (93-94).

तं शोचसि वृथैव त्वमशोच्यं मोक्षभाजनम्। आत्मा नित्योऽव्ययः शुद्धो जन्मनाशादिवर्जितः।। 95।।
शरीरं जडमत्यर्थमपवित्रं विनश्वरम्। विचार्यमाणे शोकस्य नावकाशः कथञ्चन।। 96।।

taṃ śocasi vṛthaiva tvamaśocyaṃ mokṣabhājanam /
ātmā nityo'vyayaḥ śuddho janmanāśādivarjitaḥ //
śarīraṃ jaḍamatyarthamapavitraṃ vinaśvaram /
vicāryamāṇe śokasya nāvakāśaḥ kathañcana //

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He is verily not worthy of feeling pity for, and is a worthy and honourably subject fit for emancipation and salvation. You are unnecessarily mourning for him. See, Atma (soul) is eternally imperishable and indestructible, most pure, and without any birth or destruction of any kind (i.e. it is timeless and immortal) (95), while the body is lifeless and gross, most impure, and destructible and perishable because it is prone to gradual decline and decay. When one thinks in these terms, there is no scope of regrets, grief, remorse or lamentation of any kind (96).

पिता वा तनयो वापि यदि मृत्युवशं गतः। मूढास्तमनुशोचन्ति स्वात्मताडनपूर्वकम्।। 97।।
निःसारे खलु संसारे वियोगो ज्ञानिनां यदा। भवेद्वैराग्यहेतुः स शान्तिसौख्यं तनोति च।।98।।

pitā vā tanayo vāpi yadi mṛtyuvaśaṃ gataḥ /
mūḍhāstamanuśocanti svātmatāḍanapūrvakam //
niḥsāre khalu saṁsāre viyogo jñānināṃ yadā /
bhavedvairāgyahetuḥ sa śāntisaukhyaṃ tanoti ca //

If a father or a son dies, only the ignorant fools cry or mourn for him by beating their chests (97). But in this meaningless world, if a wise person has to suffer separation from anyone, it is the cause of (or it creates or excites) renunciation and detachment for him, and enhances his peace, tranquility, happiness and bliss (thinking that his encumbrances have been proportionately reduced) (98).

जन्मवान्यदि लोकेऽस्मिंस्तर्हि तं मृत्युरन्वगात्। तस्मादपरिहार्योऽयं मृत्युर्जन्मवतां सदा।। 99।।
स्वकर्मवशतः सर्वजन्तूनां प्रभवाप्ययौ। विजानन्नप्यविद्वान्यः कथं शोचति बान्धवान्।।100।

janmavānyadi loke'smiṁstarhi taṃ mṛtyuranvagāt /
tasmādaparihāryo'yaṃ mṛtyurjanmavatāṃ sadā //
svakarmavaśataḥ sarvajantūnāṃ prabhavāpyayau /
vijānannapyavidvānyaḥ kathaṃ śocati bāndhavān //

If any one has taken birth in this world, then surely death is attached to (or inevitable for) him. Hence, for all those who have taken birth, death is an unavoidable adjunct (99). Every creature enters the cycle of new birth and death according to his own deeds and their consequences—but what an irony, look, in spite of knowing it the foolish and ignorant people have so much grief or mourn for their kith and kin, relatives and friends! (100).

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ब्रह्माण्डकोटयो नष्टाः सृष्टयो बहुशो गताः। शुष्यन्ति सागराः सर्वे कैवास्था क्षणजीविते।। 101।
चलपत्रान्तलग्नाम्बुबिन्दुवत्क्षणभङ्गुरम्। आयुस्त्यजत्यवेलायां कस्तत्र प्रत्ययस्तव।। 102।।

brahmāṇḍakoṭayo naṣṭāḥ sṛṣṭayo bahuśo gatāḥ /
śuṣyanti sāgarāḥ sarve kaivāsthā kṣaṇajīvite //
calapatrāntalagnāmbubinduvatkṣaṇabhaṅguram /
āyustyajatyavelāyāṃ kastatra pratyayastava //

Crores of (millions; that is, numerous) Brahmands (universes) have been destroyed (become extinct), numerous creations have passed away, all these oceans would dry up one day—then what should one rely (or depend) upon in this momentary and transient life? (101). This age (life) is like a drop of water hanging (or dangling) on the edge of a shaking and quivering leaf—it is momentary, transient, uncertain and unstable; it betrays and abandons without any warning. What reliance do you put on it? (102).

देही प्राक्तनदेहोत्थकर्मणा देहवान्पुनः। तद्देहोत्थेन च पुनरेवं देहः सदात्मनः।। 103।।
यथा त्यजति वै जीर्णं वासो गृह्णाति नूतनम्। तथा जीर्णं परित्यज्य देही देहं पुनर्नवम्।। 104।
भजत्येव सदा तत्र शोकस्यावसरः कुतः। आत्मा न म्रियते जातु जायते न च वर्धते।। 105।

dehī prāktanadehotthakarmaṇā dehavānpunaḥ /
taddehotthena ca punarevaṃ dehaḥ sadātmanaḥ //
yathā tyajati vai jīrṇaṃ vāso gṛhṇāti nūtanam /
tathā jīrṇaṃ parityajya dehī dehaṃ punarnavam //
bhajatyeva sadā tatra śokasyāvasaraḥ kutaḥ /
ātmā na mriyate jātu jāyate na ca vardhate //

This soul has acquired this body as a result of the deeds done by it in its previous body (birth), and by virtue of the deeds done by this (present) body, it shall get the next birth (or body). In this manner, the soul repeatedly acquires one body after another (103). Even as a man discards his old clothes and puts on new ones, so does a soul assume a new body by discarding the earlier one. Hence, what or where is the cause of sorrows and grief in it? Because the Atma never takes birth, nor dies nor increases (or decreases) at any time (104-105).

षड्भावरहितोऽनन्तः सत्यप्रज्ञानविग्रहः। आनन्दरूपो बुद्ध्यादिसाक्षी लयविवर्जितः। ।106।।
एक एव परो ह्यात्मा ह्यद्वितीयः समः स्थितः। इत्यात्मानं दृढं ज्ञात्वा त्यक्त्वा शोकं कुरु क्रियाम्।। 107।।
तैलद्रोण्याः पितुर्देहमुद्धृत्य सचिवैः सह। कृत्यं कुरु यथान्यायमस्माभिः कुलनन्दन।। 108।

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ṣaḍbhāvarahito'nantaḥ satyaprajñānavigrahaḥ /
ānandarūpo buddhyādisākṣī layavivarjitaḥ //
eka eva paro hyātmā hyadvitīyaḥ samaḥ sthitaḥ /
ityātmānaṃ dṛḍhaṃ jñātvā tyaktvā śokaṃ kuru kriyām //
tailadroṇyāḥ piturdehamuddhṛtya sacivaiḥ saha /
kṛtyaṃ kuru yathānyāyamasmābhiḥ kulanandana //

It (the soul or Atma) is devoid (free) of the so-called faults, blemishes and shortcomings associated with the body (see Canto 6, verse no. 60); it is eternal and timeless (without a beginning or end); it is an embodiment and an image of pure consciousness, supreme truth and supreme bliss; it is the witness to the mind-intellect complex (it witnesses the inner thoughts and emotions of a creature; nothing remains hidden from it); and it is indestructible and imperishable (106). That supreme, sublime and eclectic entity known as the 'soul of the creation' is one, without a match or a parallel; and it is universally present uniformly everywhere. In this manner, you should become aware of the true nature of the Atma, become free from grief and remorse, and complete your work dispassionately (or do your assigned duties in this world as has been destined or determined for you) (107). Oh 'Kul Nandan' (literally, son of the clan) Bharat! Therefore, take the body of your father out of the boat filled with oil (where it was kept earlier for preservation), and accompanied by ministers and we sages, perform his last rites according to established traditions' (108).

[Note :—Verse nos. 95-107 can be called the gospel of sage Vashistha for Bharat.]

इति सम्बोधितः साक्षाद्गुरुणा भरतस्तदा। विसृज्याज्ञानजं शोकं चक्रे सविधिवत्क्रियाम्।। 109।
गुरुणोक्तप्रकारेण आहिताग्नेर्यथाविधि। संस्कृत्य स पितुर्देहं विधिदृष्टेन कर्मणा।। 110।

iti sambodhitaḥ sākṣādguruṇā bharatastadā /
visṛjyājñānajaṃ śokaṃ cakre savidhivatkriyām //
guruṇoktaprakāreṇa āhitāgneryathāvidhi /
saṁskṛtya sa piturdehaṃ vidhidṛṣṭena karmaṇā //

When his Guru had consoled him as above, Bharat forsook grief and lamentation incited by ignorance and delusions, and did the last rites of the king (109). As per advice of his Guru, he performed the funeral of his father's body as per edicts and established traditions sanctified by the scriptures by offering, inter alia, oblations to the sacrificial holy fire (110).

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एकादशेऽहनि प्राप्ते ब्राह्मणान्वेदपारगान्। भोजयामास विधिवच्छतशोऽथ सहस्रशः।। 111।।
उद्दिश्य पितरं तत्र ब्राह्मणेभ्यो धनं बहु। ददौ गवां सहस्राणि ग्रामान् रत्नाम्बराणि च।। 112।।

ekādaśe'hani prāpte brāhmaṇānvedapāragān /
bhojayāmāsa vidhivacchataśo'tha sahasraśaḥ //
uddiśya pitaraṃ tatra brāhmaṇebhyo dhanaṃ bahu /
dadau gavāṃ sahasrāṇi grāmān ratnāmbarāṇi ca //

On the eleventh day, he fed hundreds and thousands of Brahmins who were experts in the Vedas (111), while he donated a lot of wealth, thousands of cows, many villages, garments and gems to them for the benefit of his father (i.e. for the peace and salvation of his father's soul) (112).

अवसत्स्वगृहे यत्र राममेवानुचिन्तयन्। वसिष्ठेन सह भ्राता मन्त्रिभिः परिवारितः।। 113।।
रामेऽरण्यं प्रयाते सह जनकसुतालक्ष्मणाभ्यां सुघोरं
माता मे राक्षसीव प्रदहति हृदयं दर्शनादेव सद्यः।
गच्छाम्यारण्यमद्य स्थिरमतिरखिलं दूरतोऽपास्य राज्यं
रामं सीतासमेतं स्मितरुचिरसुखं नित्यमेवानुसेवे।। 114।।

avasatsvagṛhe yatra rāmamevānucintayan /
vasiṣṭhena saha bhrātrā mantribhiḥ parivāritaḥ //
rāme'raṇyaṃ prayāte saha janakasutālakṣmaṇābhyāṃ sughoraṃ
mātā me rākṣasīva pradahati hṛdayaṃ darśanādeva sadyaḥ /
gacchāmyāraṇyamadya sthiramatirakhilaṃ dūrato'pāsya rājyaṃ
rāmaṃ sītāsametaṃ smitaruciramukhaṃ nityamevānuseve //

After that, he remained in perpetual mourning, constantly remembering Sri Ram. He began to spend his time like a recluse in his residence in the company of sage Vashistha, brother Shatrughan and royal ministers (113).

While staying in the palace thus, he used to brood and remain submerged in remorse, contrition and gloom—'Because Sri Ram has gone to a terrible (dense, fearful) forest along with the great daughter of Janak (Sita) and Laxman, my mother Kaikeyi sparks heart-burn (i.e. shame, irritation, regrets, anger, remorse and anguish) in my heart by her mere sight as if she was a cruel and merciless Demoness. Hence, without doubt, I shall go to the forest soon, and with a sweet smile on my face, I shall cheerfully and willingly serve Sri Ram—whose face is

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most beauteous (i.e. he has no anger, malice, wrath, vengeance, vindictiveness in his heart, and so his face reflects calmness, peace, tranquility, contentedness, evenness, benevolence, love and affection etc.)—along with Sita, there (114).

***

Ayodhya Kand — Canto 8

Bharat's departure for the forest; Meeting with Guha and sage Bharadwaj; Arrival at Chitrakoot

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

वसिष्ठो मुनिभिः सार्धं मन्त्रिभिः परिवारितः। राज्ञः सभां देवसभासन्निभामविशद्विभुः ।।1।।
तत्रासने समासीनश्चतुर्मुख इवापरः। आनीय भरतं तत्र उपवेश्य सहानुजम् ।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

vasiṣṭho munibhiḥ sārdhaṃ mantribhiḥ parivāritaḥ /
rājñaḥ sabhāṃ devasabhāsannibhāmaviśadvibhuḥ //
tatrāsane samāsīnaścaturmukha ivāparaḥ /
ānīya bharataṃ tatra upaveśya sahānujam //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! One day sage Vashistha, surrounded by other sages and ministers, came to the royal court which was comparable to the divine court of the Gods (1). Sitting on a seat which was as majestic and divine as that of Lord Brahma (the eldest patriarch amongst the Gods), Vashistha summoned Bharat and Shatrughan, and made them take their respective seats (2).

अब्रवीद्वचनं देशकालोचितमरिन्दमम्। वत्स राज्येऽभिषेक्ष्यामस्त्वामद्य पितृशासनात् ।।3।।
कैकेय्या याचितं राज्यं त्वदर्थे पुरुषर्षभ। सत्यसन्धो दशरथः प्रतिज्ञाय ददौ किल ।।4।।

abravīdvacanaṃ deśakālocitamarindamam /
vatsa rājye'bhiṣekṣyāmastvāmadya pitṛśāsanāt //
kaikeyyā yācitaṃ rājyaṃ tvadarthe puruṣarṣabha /
satyasandho daśarathaḥ pratijñāya dadau kila //

He said to Bharat, the vanquisher of enemies, words which were most befitting to the prevailing circumstance and time—'Oh son! According to the words of your father, we shall anoint you on the

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throne today (3). Oh the best amongst men! Kaikeyi had asked from the king kinghood for you. The king was a staunch follower of the path of truth (or was steadfast and truthful in keeping his vows and promises, or was true to his words), so he made a promise and fulfilled it by giving it (i.e. the kingdom) to her (4).

अभिषेको भवत्वद्य मुनिभिर्मन्त्रपूर्वकम्। तच्छ्रुत्वा भरतोऽप्याह मम राज्येन किं मुने।। 5।।
रामो राजाधिराजश्च वयं तस्यैव किङ्कराः। श्वःप्रभाते गमिष्यामो राममानेतुमञ्जसा।। 6।।

abhiṣeko bhavatvadya munibhirmantrapūrvakam /
tacchrutvā bharato'pyāha mama rājyena kiṃ mune //
rāmo rājādhirājaśca vayaṃ tasyaiva kiṅkarāḥ /
śvaḥprabhāte gamiṣyāmo rāmamānetumañjasā //

Hence, you should have no compunctions and reservations about it, and allow yourself to be anointed on the throne amidst chanting of Mantras (sacred hymns) by the sages and seers'. Hearing this, Bharat humbly submitted, 'Oh Lord seer! What have I got to do with this kingdom? (i.e. it is none of my concern.) (5). Sri Ram is the King of kings; we are but his humble servants (subordinates). Tomorrow morning, we shall proceed to the forest to bring him back (6).

अहं यूयं मातरश्च कैकेयीं राक्षसीं विना। हनिष्याम्यधुनैवाहं कैकेयीं मातृगन्धिनीम्।। 7।।
किन्तु मां नो रघुश्रेष्ठः स्त्रीहन्तारं सहिष्यते। तच्छ्वोभूते गमिष्यामि पादचारेण दण्डकान्।।8।।
शत्रुघ्नसहितस्तूर्णं यूयमायात वा न वा। रामो यथा वने यातस्तथाहं वल्कलाम्बरः।। 9।।
फलमूलकृताहारः शत्रुघ्नसहितो मुने। भूमिशायी जटाधारी यावद्रामो निवर्तते।। 10।।

ahaṃ yūyaṃ mātaraśca kaikeyīṃ rākṣasīṃ vinā /
haniṣyāmyadhunaivāhaṃ kaikeyīṃ mātṛgandhinīm //
kintu māṃ no raghuśreṣṭhaḥ strīhantāraṃ sahiṣyate /
tacchvobhūte gamiṣyāmi pādacāreṇa daṇḍakān //
śatrughnasahitastūrṇaṃ yūyamāyāta vā na vā /
rāmo yathā vane yātastathāhaṃ valkalāmbaraḥ //
phalamūlakṛtāhāraḥ śatrughnasahito mune /
bhūmiśāyī jaṭādhārī yāvadrāmo nivartate //

I, all of you (sages, seers, ministers) and all mothers except the demoness-like Kaikeyi—we shall all go to the forest. What can I do? Left to me, I would have killed this lady Kaikeyi—who is called my mother for the namesake only (7), but the most exalted Raghu (Sri

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Ram) would never excuse (forgive) me for slaying a woman. Therefore, at the crack of dawn tomorrow morning, whether you come along or not, I shall go with Shatrughan on foot to the Dandakaranya forest (8), oh sage, just as Sri Ram had gone. And unless and until he returns, I, along with Shatrughan, will also wear hermit-like clothes made of the bark of trees (9), make my hairs matted, eat edible roots, stems and fruits, and sleep on the ground (it is a final resolve, please do not debate the matter any further)' (10).

इति निश्चित्य भरतस्तूष्णीमेवावतस्थिवान्। साधुसाध्विति तं सर्वे प्रशशंसुर्मुदान्विताः।। 11।।
ततः प्रभाते भरतं गच्छन्तं सर्वसैनिकाः। अनुजग्मुः सुमन्त्रेण नोदिताः साश्वकुञ्जराः।। 12।।

iti niścitya bharatastūṣṇīmevāvatasthivān /
sādhusādhviti taṃ sarve praśaśaṁsurmudānvitāḥ //
tataḥ prabhāte bharataṃ gacchantaṃ sarvasainikāḥ /
anujagmuḥ sumantreṇa noditāḥ sāśvakuñjarāḥ //

Making this firm determination, Bharat fell silent. All the assembled people praised him saying 'Saintly, saintly (i.e. an exclamation of approval and endorsement of views)!' (11). Thereafter, when Bharat made his departure the next morning, at the instance of Sumantra (the head minister), all the soldiers of the royal army, along with elephants and horses, also accompanied him (12).

कौसल्याद्या राजदारा वसिष्ठप्रमुखा द्विजाः। छादयन्तो भुवं सर्वे पृष्ठतः पार्श्वतोऽग्रतः।। 13।।
शृङ्गवेरपुरं गत्वा गङ्गाकूले समन्ततः। उवास महती सेना शत्रुघ्नपरिचोदिता।। 14।।

kausalyādyā rājadārā vasiṣṭhapramukhā dvijāḥ /
chādayanto bhuvaṃ sarve pṛṣṭhataḥ pārśvato'grataḥ //
śṛṅgaverapuraṃ gatvā gaṅgākūle samantataḥ /
uvāsa mahatī senā śatrughnaparicoditā //

Kaushalya and other queens, sage Vashistha and other sages/seers, covered the ground around him (i.e. followed him closely; the crowd of people was so thick that the whole ground seemed to be covered by them)—in front and rear, sideways, everywhere according to their standing in society (13). They arrived at Sringverpur, and the huge army accompanying Bharat pitched camp at the instance of Shatrughan on the banks of river Ganges (14).

आगतं भरतं श्रुत्वा गुहः शङ्कितमानसः। महत्या सेनया सार्धमागतो भरतः किल।। 15।।

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पापं कर्तुं न वा याति रामस्याविदितात्मनः। गत्वा तद्धृदयं ज्ञेयं यदि शुद्धस्तरिष्यति।। 16।।

āgataṃ bharataṃ śrutvā guhaḥ śaṅkitamānasaḥ /
mahatyā senayā sārdhamāgato bharataḥ kila //
pāpaṃ kartuṃ na vā yāti rāmasyāviditātmanaḥ /
gatvā taddhṛdayaṃ jñeyaṃ yadi śuddhastariṣyati //

When Guha (the boatman) heard of the arrival of Bharat with a large army, he became suspicious, wondering if he (Bharat) is not going to Sri Ram with any malefic intentions. 'I should go and find out his true intentions. If his intentions are okay, then he shall be allowed to cross to the other side of the river (15-16).

गङ्गा नोचेत्समाकृष्य नावस्तिष्ठन्तु सायुधाः। ज्ञातयो मे समायत्ताः पश्यन्तः सर्वतोदिशम्।। 17।।
इति सर्वान्समादिश्य गुहो भरतमागतः। उपायनानि संगृह्य विविधानि बहून्यपि।। 18।।
प्रययौ ज्ञातिभिः सार्धं बहुभिर्विविधायुधैः। निवेद्योपायनान्यग्रे भरतस्य समन्ततः।। 19।।
दृष्ट्वा भरतमासीनं सानुजं सह मन्त्रिभिः। चीराम्बरं घनश्यामं जटामुकुटधारिणम्।। 20।।

gaṅgā nocetsamākṛṣya nāvastiṣṭhantu sāyudhāḥ /
jñātayo me samāyattāḥ paśyantaḥ sarvatodiśam //
iti sarvānsamādiśya guho bharatamāgataḥ /
upāyanāni saṅgṛhya vividhāni bahūnyapi //
prayayau jñātibhiḥ sārdhaṃ bahubhirvividhāyudhaiḥ /
nivedyopāyanānyagre bharatasya samantataḥ //
dṛṣṭvā bharatamāsīnaṃ sānujaṃ saha mantribhiḥ /
cīrāmbaraṃ ghanaśyāmaṃ jaṭāmukuṭadhāriṇam //

Otherwise (I'll see to it that he never crosses the river), my clans-men should arm themselves with their weapons and become alert. They must pull the boats off from the bank and station them in the middle of the river' (17). Having issued these instructions to his people, Guha collected various types of gift-offerings and, accompanied by many fully armed clans-men (kith and kin, relatives and compatriots), he came to meet Bharat (18-19). There, he kept all the gifts before him, and looking askance, he saw that the dark-complexioned Bharat, attired in clothes made of bark of trees and with matted hairs, is sitting with his younger brother and ministers (20).

राममेवानुशोचन्तं रामरामेति वादिनम्। ननाम शिरसा भूमौ गुहोऽहमिति चाब्रवीत्।। 21।।
शीघ्रमुत्थाप्य भरतो गाढमालिङ्ग्य सादरम्। पृष्ट्वानामयमव्यग्रः सखायमिदमब्रवीत्।। 22।।
भ्रातस्त्वं राघवेणात्र समेतः समवस्थितः। रामेणालिङ्गितः सार्द्रनयनेनामलात्मना।। 23।।

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rāmamevānuśocantaṃ rāmarāmeti vādinam /
nanāma śirasā bhūmau guho'hamiti cābravīt //
śīghramutthāpya bharato gāḍhamāliṅgya sādaram /
pṛṣṭvā nāmayamavyagraḥ sakhāyamidamabravīt //
bhrātastvaṃ rāghaveṇātra sametaḥ samavasthitaḥ /
rāmeṇāliṅgitaḥ sārdranayanenāmalātmanā //

He (Bharat) was remembering Sri Ram and repeating his name 'Ram, Ram'. Seeing this, Guha put his head on the ground (to pay obeisance to Bharat), bowed before him and said—'I am Guha' (21). Bharat lifted him immediately, embraced him firmly, and happily asked about his welfare. Then he said to Guha as if he was his friend (22), 'Oh brother! You had lived (i.e. spent some time) with Sri Ram here, and the pure-hearted Sri Ram had embraced you with tearful eyes (i.e. with great affection) (23).

धन्योऽसि कृतकृत्योऽसि यत्त्वया परिभाषितः। रामो राजीवपत्राक्षो लक्ष्मणेन च सीतया।। 24।।
यत्र रामस्त्वया दृष्टस्तत्र मां नय सुव्रत। सीतया सहितो यत्र सुप्तस्तद्दर्शयस्व मे।। 25।।
त्वं रामस्य प्रियतमो भक्तिमानसि भाग्यवान्। इति संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रामं साश्रुविलोचनः।। 26।।

dhanyo'si kṛtakṛtyo'si yattvayā paribhāṣitaḥ /
rāmo rājīvapatrākṣo lakṣmaṇena ca sītayā //
yatra rāmastvayā dṛṣṭastatra māṃ naya suvrata /
sītayā sahito yatra suptastaddarśayasva me //
tvaṃ rāmasya priyatamo bhaktimānasi bhāgyavān /
iti saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya rāmaṃ sāśruvilocanaḥ //

You have talked with the lotus-eyed Sri Ram, along with Sita and Laxman. Hence, you are most privileged and fortunate; your life is successful (or fruitful) (24). Oh the righteous one! Take me to the place (spot) where you had first seen Sri Ram; show me the place where he had slept (i.e. spent the night) along with Sita (25). You are Sri Ram's most beloved friend and a privileged, fortunate devotee'. In this way, Bharat's eyes were filled with tears of devotion, dedication, love and affection by repeatedly and fondly remembering Sri Ram (26).

गुहेन सहितस्तत्र यत्र रामः स्थितो निशि। ययौ ददर्श शयनस्थलं कुशसमास्तृतम्।। 27।।
सीताभरणसंलग्नस्वर्णबिन्दुभिरर्चितम्। दुःखसन्तप्तहृदयो भरतः पर्यदेवयत्।। 28।।

guhena sahitastatra yatra rāmaḥ sthito niśi /
yayau dadarśa śayanasthalaṃ kuśasamāstṛtam //

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sītābharaṇasaṁlagnasvarṇabindubhirarcitam /
duḥkhasantaptahṛdayo bharataḥ paryadevayat //

In this way, being greatly perturbed and agitated mentally, and feeling exceedingly remorseful due to the anguish of separation as well as the ignominious cause of it, he eagerly went to the spot with Guha where Sri Ram had stayed during the night. There he saw the place where Sri Ram had slept on the ground, with the grass still spread over it. [Probably, Guha had maintained that place in original shape as a memento or as a token of remembrance in honour of his exalted guests.] (27).

It was adorned (or authenticated) by gold particles (pieces, scrapings) falling off from the ornaments worn by Sita. Seeing it, Bharat's heart became overwhelmed with sorrows, contrition and remorse. He lamented woefully (28)—

अहोऽतिसुकुमारी या सीता जनकनन्दिनी। प्रासादे रत्नपर्यङ्के कोमलास्तरणे शुभे।। 29।।
रामेण सहिता शेते सा कथं कुशविष्टरे। सीता रामेण सहिता दुःखेन मम दोषतः।। 30।।

aho'tisukumārī yā sītā janakanandinī /
prāsāde ratnaparyaṅke komalāstaraṇe śubhe //
rāmeṇa sahitā śete sā kathaṃ kuśaviṣṭare /
sītā rāmeṇa sahitā duḥkhena mama doṣataḥ //

'Alas! That most tender and dearest daughter of Janak, Sita, who used to sleep in the royal palace on a soft mattress on a beautiful gem-studded bedstead with Sri Ram, with what hardships did she sleep on this hard make-shift bed of grass blades with Sri Ram—all because of my faults? (29-30).

धिङ् मां जातोऽस्मि कैकेय्या पापराशिसमानतः। मन्निमित्तमिदं क्लेशं रामस्य परमात्मनः।। 31।।
अहोऽतिसफलं जन्म लक्ष्मणस्य महात्मनः। राममेव सदान्वेति वनस्थमपि हृष्टधीः।। 32।।

dhiṅmāṃ jāto'smi kaikeyyā pāparāśisamānataḥ /
mannimittamidaṃ kleśaṃ rāmasya paramātmanaḥ //
aho'tisaphalaṃ janma lakṣmaṇasya mahātmanaḥ /
rāmameva sadānveti vanasthamapi hṛṣṭadhīḥ //

Shame to me! I have taken birth as a treasure-house of sins and evils from the womb of Kaikeyi. Alas! It is because of me that the supreme Soul of the creation, called Parmatma Sri Ram, had to suffer from so much trouble (31). Alas! The great soul Laxman's life is blessed

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that he happily follows Lord Ram even while the latter lives in the forest (32).

अहं रामस्य दासा ये तेषां दासस्य किङ्करः। यदि स्यां सफलं जन्म मम भूयान्न संशयः।। 33।।
भ्रातर्जानासि यदि तत्कथयस्व ममाखिलम्। यत्र तिष्ठति तत्राहं गच्छाम्यानेतुमञ्जसा।। 34।।

ahaṃ rāmasya dāsā ye teṣāṃ dāsasya kiṅkaraḥ /
yadi syāṃ saphalaṃ janma mama bhūyānna saṁśayaḥ //
bhrātarjānāsi yadi tatkathayasva mamākhilam /
yatra tiṣṭhati tatrāhaṃ gacchāmyānetumañjasā //

My life would be deemed successful if I ever happen to become a humble servant (follower, subordinate, supplicant) of even those who are junior servants or second rung servants of those who directly serve Sri Ram—there is no doubt about it (33). Oh brother (Guha)! If you know, please do tell me truthfully where he (Sri Ram) is? Wherever he is, I shall go there forthwith to bring him back' (34).

गुहस्तं शुद्धहृदयं ज्ञात्वा सस्नेहमब्रवीत्। देव त्वमेव धन्योऽसि यस्य ते भक्तिरीदृशी।। 35।।
रामे राजीवपत्राक्षे सीतायां लक्ष्मणे तथा। चित्रकूटाद्रिनिकटे मन्दाकिन्यविदूरतः।। 36।।
मुनीनामाश्रमपदे रामस्तिष्ठति सानुजः। जानक्या सहितो नन्दात्सुखमास्ते किल प्रभुः।। 37।।

guhastaṃ śuddhahṛdayaṃ jñātvā sasnehamabravīt /
deva tvameva dhanyo'si yasya te bhaktirīdṛśī //
rāme rājīvapatrākṣe sītāyāṃ lakṣmaṇe tathā /
citrakūṭādrinikaṭe mandākinyāvidūrataḥ //
munīnāmāśramapade rāmastiṣṭhati sānujaḥ /
jānakyā sahito nandātsukhamāste kila prabhuḥ //

Observing that Bharat's heart and mind were clean and free from any deceit and conspiracy, Guha said affectionately—'Oh Lord! You have such a truly pure devotion for the lotus-eyed Sri Ram, Sita and Laxman that it is you who are really blessed and privileged (35). Together with the younger brother Laxman, Sri Ram resides near Mt. Chitrakoot in the vicinity of river Mandakini (36) in a place having a number of hermitages of hermits and ascetics. There, Sri Ram is happily and comfortably put-up (resides) along with Janki (Sita) and younger brother (Laxman) (37).

तत्र गच्छामहे शीघ्रं गङ्गां तर्तुमिहार्हसि। इत्युक्त्वा त्वरितं गत्वा नावः पञ्चशतानि ह।। 38।।
समानयत्सचैन्यस्य तर्तुं गङ्गां महानदीम्। स्वयमेवानिनायैकां राजनावं गुहस्तदा।। 39।।

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आरोप्य भरतं तत्र शत्रुघ्नं राममातरम्। वसिष्ठं च तथान्यत्र कैकेयीं चान्ययोषितः ।। 40 ।।

tatra gacchāmahe śīghraṃ gaṅgāṃ tartumihārhasi /
ityuktvā tvaritaṃ gatvā nāvaḥ pañcaśatāni ha //
samānayatsasainyasya tartuṃ gaṅgāṃ mahānadīm /
svayamevānināyaikāṃ rājnāvaṃ guhastadā //
āropya bharataṃ tatra śatrughnaṃ rāmamātaram /
vasiṣṭhaṃ ca tathānyatra kaikeyīṃ cānyayoṣitaḥ //

Come, let us go there hastily. First, all of you cross the river Ganges here'. Saying this, he quickly summoned five hundred boats (38) for the army to cross over the great river, and brought a special larger boat (perhaps the one he used for himself, or the one which was used for Sri Ram earlier) himself (39). In that boat, he took Bharat, Shatrughan, Sri Ram's mother Kaushalya and sage Vashistha, and in another boat he put Kaikeyi and other royal women folk (40).

[Note :—Despite Bharat's special injunction barring Kaikeyi from coming with the party—see verse no. 7—she did come along as is evident in this verse no. 40; perhaps out of guilt and shame, or fear of being murdered while being left alone in Ayodhya, or to ensure that Sri Ram does not come back at the last moment. In all probability, if Sri Ram had concurred with Bharat's demand, there was a possibility of Kaikeyi throwing a sparkling fire-work display of her tantrums in the forest itself. But as it happened, Sri Ram refused to come back to Ayodhya. This resulted in her being completely unhinged and deflated; she must have then felt an ocean of guilt drowning her, and overcome with her guilty conscious telling her that she has committed an unpardonable crime against a righteous and virtuous man, who was an idol of compassion, mercy and love, she finally decided to repent by asking for forgiveness from the Lord. We shall see later that when she finally approached the Lord asking for forgiveness, he showed no anger and ill-will against her. What more proof did Kaikeyi need that Sri Ram was the noblest man alive! That regret never left her the rest of her life.]

तीर्त्वा गङ्गां ययौ शीघ्रं भरद्वाजाश्रमं प्रति। दूरे स्थाप्य महासैन्यं भरतः सानुजो ययौ ।। 41 ।।
आश्रमे मुनिमासीनं ज्वलन्तमिव पावकम्। दृष्ट्वा ननाम भरतः साष्टाङ्गमतिभक्तितः ।। 42 ।।

tīrtvā gaṅgāṃ yayau śīghraṃ bharadvājāśramaṃ prati /
dūre sthāpya mahāsainyaṃ bharataḥ sānujo yayau //
āśrame munimāsīnaṃ jvalantamiva pāvakam/
dṛṣṭvā nanāma bharataḥ sāṣṭāṅgamatibhaktitaḥ //

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They readily crossed river Ganges and proceeded towards the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj. There, leaving behind his huge army a little behind, Bharat, along with his brother Shatrughan, went to the hermitage (41) and on seeing the sage— who was as splendorous as a burning fire (i.e. was radiant with holy, divine glow effusing from him)— sitting there, Bharat prostrated before him with devotion (42).

ज्ञात्वा दाशरथिं प्रीत्या पूजयामास मौनिराट्। पप्रच्छ कुशलं दृष्ट्वा जटावल्कलधारिणम्।। 43 ।।
राज्यं प्रशासतस्तेऽद्य किमेतद्वल्कलादिकम्। आगतोऽसि किमर्थं त्वं विपिनं मुनिसेवितम्।। 44 ।।

jñātvā dāśarathiṃ prītyā pūjayāmāsa maunirāṭ /
papraccha kuśalaṃ dṛṣṭvā jaṭāvalkaladhāriṇam //
rājyaṃ praśāsataste'dya kimetadvalkalādikam /
āgato'si kimarthaṃ tvaṃ vipinaṃ munisevitam //

When the exalted sage came to know that he is Dashrath's son Bharat, he affectionately worshipped and honoured (i.e. showed due respect to) the latter. Seeing that he was wearing clothes made of bark of trees (birch) and had matted hairs, the sage asked about his general welfare, and then specifically enquired (43), 'Why have you attired (dressed) yourself in clothes made of birch while reigning as a king, and why have you come in this forest which is known for penances and austerities and which is inhabited (literally, served) by hermits and ascetics?' (44).

[Note :—Compare this with Canto 6, verse nos. 37-40 wherein Bharadwaj tells Sri Ram that he knows why he has come to the forest. It seems incredulous to think that the exalted sage did not know why Bharat has come. It appears that he just wished to find out what Bharat had in his mind, just as Guha had earlier done in verse nos. 15-16. He was testing his integrity and sincerity. See Bharat's reply in the following verse :-]

भरद्वाजवचः श्रुत्वा भरतः साश्रुलोचनः। सर्वं जानासि भगवन् सर्वभूताशयस्थितः।। 45 ।।
तथापि पृच्छसे किञ्चित्तदनुग्रह एव मे। कैकेय्या यत्कृतं कर्म रामराज्यविघातनम्।। 46 ।।
वनवासादिकं वापि न हि जानामि किञ्चन। भवत्पादयुगं मेऽद्य प्रमाणं मुनिसत्तम।। 47 ।।

bharadvājavacaḥ śrutvā bharataḥ sāśrulocanaḥ /
sarvaṃ jānāsi bhagavan sarvabhūtāśayasthitaḥ //
tathāpi pṛcchase kiñcittadanugraha eva me /
kaikeyyā yatkṛtaṃ karma rāmarājyavighātanam //
vanavāsādikaṃ vāpi na hi jānāmi kiñcana /
bhavatpādayugaṃ me'dya pramāṇaṃ munisattama //

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Hearing these words of sage Bharadwaj, Bharat replied with tearful eyes, 'Oh Lord! You know everything because you are all-knowing (45). Still whatever you ask is your grace upon me! [With reference to note of the preceding verse no. 44, this is a highly sarcastic reply of Bharat.] The ugly incident that Kaikeyi had created putting an obstacle in the anointment of Sri Ram on the throne (46), and the fact that he has been sent to the forest exile—Oh the best among sages, I say on oath with your holy feet as witness, I had no idea of anything about it earlier (i.e. I had no inkling of what was in store for me, or what mischief my mother was planning; I am not a party to it at all)' (47).

इत्युक्त्वा पादयुगलं मुनेः स्पृष्ट्वाऽर्त्तमानसः। ज्ञातुमर्हसि मां देव शुद्धो वाशुद्ध एव वा।।48।।
मम राज्येन किं स्वामिन् रामे तिष्ठति राजनि। किङ्करोऽहं मुनिश्रेष्ठ रामचन्द्रस्य शाश्वतः।।49।।

ityuktvā pādayugalaṃ muneḥ spṛṣṭvā'rttamānasaḥ /
jñātumarhasi māṃ deva śuddho vāśuddha eva vā //
mama rājyena kiṃ svāmin rāme tiṣṭhati rājani /
kiṅkaro'haṃ muniśreṣṭha rāmacandrasya śāśvataḥ //

Saying this, he caught hold of both the feet of the sage with a tormented and anguished mind and heart, saying, 'Oh Lord! You can know (judge) it yourself whether I am guilty or innocent (48). Oh Lord! What purpose (interest) do I have with the kingdom when King Sri Ram is around? Oh the most exalted sage! I have been Sri Ram's humble follower ever since birth (49).

अतो गत्वा मुनिश्रेष्ठ रामस्य चरणान्तिके। पतित्वा राज्यसम्भारान् समर्प्यात्रैव राघवम्।। 50।।
अभिषेक्ष्ये वसिष्ठाद्यैः पौरजानपदैः सह। नेष्येऽयोध्यां रमानाथं दासः सेवेऽतिनीचवत्।।51।।

ato gatvā muniśreṣṭha rāmasya caraṇāntike /
patitvā rājyasambhārān samarpyātraiva rāghavam //
abhiṣekṣye vasiṣṭhādyaiḥ paurajānapadaiḥ saha /
neṣye'yodhyāṃ ramānāthaṃ dāsaḥ sevetinīcavat //

Hence, oh the noble sage, I shall go to Sri Ram, catch hold of his feet and put all these paraphernalia of kinghood in his custody (or offer them to him) in the forest itself (50). Then accompanied by sage Vashistha, citizens and other subjects of the kingdom, I shall crown him (on the throne of the kingdom) and take him back to Ayodhya where I shall serve Laxmi's Lord (Sri Ram) like a humble servant' (51).

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इत्युदीरितमाकर्ण्य भरतस्य वचो मुनिः। आलिङ्ग्य मूर्ध्न्यवघ्राय प्रशशंस सविस्मयः।। 52।।
वत्स ज्ञातं पुरैवैतद्भविष्यं ज्ञानचक्षुषा। मा शुचस्त्वं परो भक्तः श्रीरामे लक्ष्मणादपि।। 53।।
आतिथ्यं कर्तुमिच्छामि ससैन्यस्य तवानघ। अद्य भुक्त्वा ससैन्यस्त्वं श्वो गन्ता रामसन्निधिम्।। 54।।

ityudīritamākarṇyaṃ bharatasya vaco muniḥ /
āliṅgya mūrdhnyavaghrāya praśaśaṁsa savismayaḥ //
vatsa jñātaṃ puraivaitadbhaviṣyaṃ jñānacakṣuṣā /
mā śucastvaṃ paro bhaktaḥ śrīrāme lakṣmaṇādapi //
ātithyaṃ kartumicchāmi sasainyasya tavānagha /
adya bhuktvā sasainyastvaṃ śvo gantā rāmasannidhim //

Hearing these sincere emotional outpourings of Bharat's heart, the sage clasped him to his bosom, smelled his head (as a token of affection) and began praising him thus (52)—'Oh son! I had already known these events through my eyes of transcendental vision. [See how this contrasts with verse no. 44 where he expresses total ignorance.] You should not regret, mourn or lament for you are a greater and superior devotee (follower and dear) of Sri Ram as compared to Laxman (53). Oh the sinless, pure and faultless one (Anagh)! I want to extend my warm welcome gesture (i.e. hospitality) not only to you but also to your entire army and retinue. You must have your meals with your army and entourage here today and proceed to Sri Ram's place tomorrow' (54).

यथाज्ञापयति भवांस्तथेति भरतोऽब्रवीत्। भरद्वाजस्त्वपः स्पृष्ट्वा मौनी होमगृहे स्थितः।। 55।।
दध्यौ कामदुधां कामवर्षिणीं कामदो मुनिः। असृजत्कामधुक् सर्वं यथाकाममलौकिकम्।। 56।।

yathājñāpayati bhavāṁstatheti bharato'bravīt /
bharadvājastvapaḥ spṛṣṭvā maunī homagṛhe sthitaḥ //
dadhyau kāmadudhāṃ kāmavarṣiṇīṃ kāmado muniḥ /
asṛjatkāmadhuk sarvaṃ yathākāmamalaukikam //

Bharat said, 'It shall be done as you order'. Then sage Bharadwaj sipped some holy water and sat down in his 'Yagya-Shala' (a place sanctified for performing fire and other religious sacrifices) (55). Sitting there, that all-bestowing (wish-fulfilling) sage invoked the 'Kamdhenu cow' which has the potential powers to fulfill all desires. That (holy, divine, celestial) cow then presented all the majestic and magnificent items of worldly comforts (before the sage for the benefit of Bharat and his party) (56).

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भरतस्य ससैन्यस्य यथेष्टं च मनोरथम्। यथा ववर्ष सकलं तृप्तास्ते सर्वसैनिकाः।। 57।।
वसिष्ठं पूजयित्वाग्रे शास्त्रदृष्टेन कर्मणा। पश्चात्ससैन्यं भरतं तर्पयामास योगिराट्।। 58।।

bharatasya sasainyasya yatheṣṭaṃ ca manoratham /
yathā vavarṣa sakalaṃ tṛptāste sarvasainikāḥ //
vasiṣṭhaṃ pūjayitvāgre śāstradṛṣṭena karmaṇā /
paścātsasainyaṃ bharataṃ tarpayāmāsa yogirāṭ //

She satisfied all the requirements of Bharat and his army so that all the soldiers and men were happy and contented (57). After that, the king of ascetics (i.e. Bharadwaj) worshipped and honoured sage Vashistha according to the edicts of the scriptures. Thereafter, he satisfied Bharat along with the entire army and entourage (i.e. made them fully contented and feel extremely welcomed and honoured) (58).

[Note :—Bharadwaj created a virtual heaven-on-earth for one night for Bharat's party. He wished to test their detachment from material comforts and the sincerity of their devotion for Sri Ram.]

उषित्वा दिनमेकं तु आश्रमे स्वर्गसन्निभे। अभिवाद्य पुनः प्रातर्भरद्वाजं सहानुजः।
भरतस्तु कृतानुज्ञः प्रययौ रामसन्निधिम्।। 59।।
चित्रकूटमनुप्राप्य दूरे संस्थाप्य सैनिकान्। रामसंदर्शनाकाङ्क्षी प्रययौ भरतः स्वयम्।। 60।।

uṣitvā dinamekaṃ tu āśrame svargasannibhe /
abhivādya punaḥ prātarbharadvājaṃ sahānujaḥ /
bharatastu kṛtānujñaḥ prayayau rāmasannidhim //
citrakūṭamanuprāpya dūre saṁsthāpya sainikān /
rāmasaṁdarśanākāṅkṣī prayayau bharataḥ svayam //

Staying there for one day (and night) in that heaven-like hermitage, at the first ray of the sun the next morning, Bharat bowed before the sage, took his permission and moved on to Sri Ram's place along with his brother and the entire entourage (59). When he reached in the vicinity of Chitrakoot, he stopped the soldiers of the army a little distance away, and moved ahead himself to have a Darshan (divine viewing) of Sri Ram (60).

शत्रुघ्नेन सुमन्त्रेण गुहेन च परन्तपः। तपस्विमण्डलं सर्वं विचिन्वानो न्यवर्तत।। 61।।
अदृष्ट्वा रामभवनपृच्छद्भृषिमण्डलम्। कुत्रास्ते सीतया सार्धं लक्ष्मणेन रघूत्तमः।।62।।

śatrughnena sumantreṇa guhena ca parantapaḥ /
tapasvimaṇḍalaṃ sarvaṃ vicinvāno nyavartata //

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adṛṣṭvā rāmabhavanamapṛcchadṛṣimaṇḍalam /
kutrāste sītayā sārdhaṃ lakṣmaṇena raghūttamaḥ //

Bharat, Shatrughan, Sumantra and Guha went around all the different clusters of hermitages of those who were doing penances/ austerities there, and not finding Sri Ram anywhere despite their best efforts, they returned empty handed (61). Then they asked the group of sages—'Where does Sri Ram live along with Sita and Laxman?' (62).

ऊचुरग्रे गिरेः पश्चाद्गङ्गाया उत्तरे तटे। विविक्तं रामसदनं रम्यं काननमण्डितम्।। 63।।
सफलैराम्रपनसैः कदलीखण्डसंवृतम् चम्पकैः कोविदारैश्च पुन्नागैर्विपुलैस्तथा।।64।।
एवं दर्शितमालोक्य मुनिभिर्भरतोऽग्रतः। हर्षाद्ययौ रघुश्रेष्ठभवनं मन्त्रिणा सह।। 65।।

ūcuragre gireḥ paścādgaṅgāyā uttare taṭe /
viviktaṃ rāmasadanaṃ ramyaṃ kānanamaṇḍitam //
saphalairāmrapanasaiḥ kadalīkhaṇḍasaṅvṛtam /
campakaiḥ kovidāraiśca punnāgairvipulaistathā //
evaṃ darśitamālokya munibhirbharato'grataḥ /
harṣādyayau raghuśreṣṭhabhavanaṃ mantriṇā saha //

The sages replied, 'On the other side of that mountain on the yonder, on the northern banks of river Mandakini, is the lonely (secluded) cottage of Sri Ram at a place adorned by a verdant forest (63). It is hedged (surrounded) by Mango trees, Plantain trees and 'Panas' (Jack fruit) trees. Besides these, there are trees of various colourful flowers such as Magnolia, 'Kachnar' (*Banbinia Variegata;* its flowers are used as vegetable) and 'Nag Keshar' (a medicinal tree called *Messya Ferrea*) adorning the area' (64). Having received this guidance, Bharat, along with his ministers, cheerfully and eagerly moved ahead in that direction where the most exalted Raghu's (Sri Ram's) dwelling/hermitage was located (65).

ददर्श दूरादतिभासुरं शुभं रामस्य गेहं मुनिवृन्दसेवितम्।
वृक्षाग्रसंलग्नसुवल्कलाजिनं रामाभिरामं भरतः सहानुजः।।66।।

dadarśa dūrādatibhāsuraṃ śubhaṃ rāmasya gehaṃ munivṛndasevitam /
vṛkṣāgrasaṅlagnasuvalkalājinaṃ rāmābhirāmaṃ bharataḥ sahānujaḥ //

Moving ahead, Bharat, along with his brother, had a glimpse of the beautiful dwelling/hermitage of Sri Ram which was served (i.e. serviced or tended by) the hermits and ascetics (living in its vicinity).

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In it, clothes made from bark of trees (e.g. birch) and deer-skin were hung up on branches of trees (for sunning or drying). The place was rendered most magnificent, enthralling and attractive by the virtue of Sri Ram's residence there (66)

***

Ayodhya Kand — Canto 9

Sri Ram-Bharat meeting; Bharat's return to Ayodhya; Sri Ram's arrival at sage Atri's hermitage

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

अथ गत्वाश्रमपदसमीपं भरतोमुदा। सीतारामपदैर्युक्तं पवित्रमतिशोभनम्।।1।।
स तत्र वज्राङ्कुशवारिजाञ्चितध्वजादिचिह्नानि पदानि सर्वतः।
ददर्श रामस्य भुवोऽतिमङ्गलान्यचेष्टयत्पादरजःसु सानुजः।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

atha gatvāśramapadasamīpaṃ bharato mudā /
sītārāmapadairyuktaṃ pavitramatiśobhanam //
sa tatra vajrāṅkuśavārijāñcitadhvajādicihnāni padāni sarvataḥ /
dadarśa rāmasya bhuvo'timaṅgalānyaceṣṭayatpādarajaḥsu sānujaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Thereafter, with a mind and heart extremely delighted and submerged in joy, Bharat reached the most pleasant and holy area near the hermitage which was adorned (or made glorified) by the footprints of Sita and Sri Ram (1). There they saw on the ground in every direction foot prints of Lord Ram identified (or marked) by the auspicious signs or marks of a Vajra (Indra's weapon), a goad, a lotus and a divine flag etc. Seeing them, Bharat along with his brother Shatrughan, began to roll over in the dust in the ground where the holy foot prints were (2).

अहो सुधन्योऽहममूनि रामपादारविन्दाङ्कितभूतलानि।
पश्यामि यत्पादरजो विमृग्यं ब्रह्मादिदेवैः श्रुतिभिश्च नित्यम्।।3।।

aho sudhnyo'hamamūni rāmapādāravindāṅkitabhūtalāni /
paśyāmi yatpādarajo vimṛgyaṃ brahmādidevaiḥ śrutibhiśca nityam //

'Ah! I am the most blessed and fortunate one today that I behold

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that earth adorned by the marks of those holy feet, the dust of which are always searched for by Lord Brahma and other Gods as well as by all the Vedas' (3).

इत्यद्भुतप्रेमरसाप्लुताशयो विगाढचेत्ता रघुनाथभावने।
आनन्दजाश्रुस्नपितस्तनान्तरः शनैरवापाश्रमसन्निधिं हरेः।।4।।

ityadbhutapremarasāplutāśayo vigāḍhacetā raghunāthabhāvane /
ānandajāśrusnapitastanāntaraḥ śanairavāpāśramasannidhiṃ hareḥ //

In this manner, Bharat—whose heart was filled with the magnificent and marvelous juice of love and affection, whose mind and heart was submerged in fond remembrance of Raghunath (Sri Ram), and whose bosom was drenched in tears of joy, exhilaration and happiness—slowly neared the hermitage of Hari (Lord Vishnu as Sri Ram) (4).

स तत्र दृष्ट्वा रघुनाथमास्थितं दूर्वादलश्यामलमायतेक्षणम्।
जटाकिरीटं नववल्कलाम्बरं प्रसन्नवक्त्रं तरुणारुणद्युतिम्।।5।।

sa tatra dṛṣṭvā raghunāthamāsthitaṃ dūrvādalaśyāmalamāyatekṣaṇam /
jaṭākirīṭaṃ navavalkalāmbaraṃ prasannavaktraṃ taruṇāruṇadyutim //

Then he (Bharat) saw Raghunath (Sri Ram)—whose body was dark as the 'Durba' grass (a special category of grass which is dark green in colour and used for religious purposes) and whose eyes were broad (or large), who was attired in new clothes made of birch and had a crown of matted hairs on his head, who had a cheerful disposition and pleasant, smiling face, and who was as magnificent, glorious, splendorous and radiant as a mid-day sun—sitting there (5).

विलोकयन्तं जनकात्मजां शुभां सौमित्रिणा सेवितपादपङ्कजम्।
तदाभिदुद्राव रघूत्तमं शुचा हर्षाच्च तत्पादयुगं त्वराग्रहीत्।।6।।

vilokayantaṃ janakātmajāṃ śubhāṃ saumitriṇā sevitapādapaṅkajam /
tadābhidudrāva raghūttamaṃ śucā harṣācca tatpādayugaṃ tvarāgrahīt //

He was glancing at the virtuous daughter of Janak (Sita), and his feet were being attended to (i.e. served) by Laxman. Seeing them, Bharat dashed forward, and submerged in and buffeted by unbound (or overwhelmed by) emotions of exhilaration and sorrows at the same time, he clasped both his (Sri Ram's) feet (6).

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[Note :—In Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, it was Sri Ram who had dashed forward to meet Bharat and not vice versa.]

रामस्तमाकृष्य सुदीर्घबाहुर्दोर्भ्यां परिष्वज्य सिषिञ्च नेत्रजैः।
जलैरथाङ्कोपरि संन्यवेशयत् पुनः पुनः संपरिषस्वजे विभुः।।7।।
अथ ता मातराः सर्वाः समाजग्मुस्त्वरान्विताः। राघवं द्रष्टुकामास्तास्तृषार्ता गौर्यथा जलम्।।8।।

rāmastamākṛṣya sudīrghabāhurdorbhyāṃ pariṣvajya siṣiñca netrajaiḥ /
jalairathāṅkopari saṁnyaveśayat punaḥ punaḥ saṃpariṣasvaje vibhuḥ //
atha tā mātaraḥ sarvāḥ samājagmustvarānvitāḥ /
rāghavaṃ draṣṭukāmāstāstṛṣārtā gauryathā jalam //

Sri Ram, who had long arms, lifted Bharat with both his arms and embraced him most affectionately, made him sit on his lap lovingly, and drenching him with his tears, repeatedly clasped him to his bosom (7). Then, just as thirsty cows rush towards water, Kaushalya and all other mothers hastily and eagerly moved ahead to see (meet) Raghav (Sri Ram) (8).

रामः स्वमातरं वीक्ष्य द्रुतमुत्थाय पादयोः। ववन्दे साश्रु सा पुत्रमालिङ्ग्यातीव दुःखिता।।9।।
इतराश्च तथा नत्वा जननी रघुनन्दनः। ततः समागतं दृष्ट्वा वसिष्ठं मुनिपुङ्गवम्।।10।।

rāmaḥ svamātaraṃ vīkṣya drutamutthāya pādayoḥ /
vavande sāśru sā putramāliṅgyātīva duḥkhitā //
itarāśca tathā natvā jananī raghunandanaḥ /
tataḥ samāgataṃ dṛṣṭvā vasiṣṭhaṃ munipuṅgavam //

As soon as Sri Ram saw his mother, he got up quickly and paid his obeisance at her feet, while she embraced her son with tearful eyes and a heart full of extreme sorrows and anguish (9). Then Raghunandan (Sri Ram) similarly bowed before order mothers as well to pay his respects. Then, seeing the most exalted sage Vashistha coming there (10)—

साष्टाङ्गं प्रणिपत्याह धन्योऽस्मीति पुनः पुनः। यथार्हमुपवेश्याह सर्वानेव रघूद्वहः।।11।।
पिता मे कुशली किं वा मां किमाहातिदुःखितः। वसिष्ठस्तमुवाचेदं पिता ते रघुनन्दन।।12।।
त्वद्वियोगाभितप्तात्मा त्वामेव परिचिन्तयन्। राम रामेति सीतेति लक्ष्मणेति ममार ह।।13।।

sāṣṭāṅgaṃ praṇipatyāha dhanyo'smīti punaḥ punaḥ /
yathārhamupaveśyāha sarvāneva raghūdvahaḥ //
pitā me kuśalī kiṃ vā māṃ kimāhātiduḥkhitaḥ /
vasiṣṭhastamuvācedaṃ pitā te raghunandana //

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tvadviyogābhitaptātmā tvāmeva paricintayan /
rāma rāmeti sīteti lakṣmaṇeti mamāra ha //

He (Sri Ram) prostrated himself before him and repeatedly said, 'I am blessed and fortunate'. Then Sri Ram seated all of them properly (according to their stature and position in society) and asked (11), 'Say, is my father alright? What orders has he given for me, being overwhelmed as he is by the agony and grief of my separation?' Then, sage Vashistha replied, 'Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Your father, being greatly tormented by your separation, had left his mortal coil (i.e. has died) all the while remembering you and calling out your name 'Oh Ram, Oh Ram, Oh Sita, Oh Laxman' constantly during his last moments (12-13).

श्रुत्वा तत्कर्णशूलाभं गुरोर्वचनमञ्जसा। हा हतोऽस्मीति पतितो रुदन् रामः सलक्ष्मणः ।। 14 ।।
ततोऽनुरुरुदुः सर्वा मातरश्च तथापरे। हा तात मां परित्यज्य क्व गतोऽसि घृणाकर ।। 15 ।।
अनाथोऽस्मि महाबाहो मां को वा लालयेदितः। सीता च लक्ष्मणश्चैव विलेपतुरतो भृशम् ।। 16 ।।

śrutvā tatkarṇaśūlābhaṃ gurorvacanamañjasā /
hā hato'smīti patito rudan rāmaḥ salakṣmaṇaḥ //
tato'nururuduḥ sarvā mātaraśca tathāpare /
hā tāta māṃ parityajya kva gatā'si ghṛṇākara //
anātho'smi mahābāho māṃ ko vā lālayeditaḥ /
sītā ca lakṣmaṇaścaiva vilepaturato bhṛśam //

Hearing these shocking words from their Guru, which appeared like thorns or spikes for their ears, Sri Ram and Laxman cried out 'Alas! We have been gravely hurt and grieved beyond redemption', and fell to the ground (14). (Seeing them) All the mothers and others present there also began to weep and sob. He (Sri Ram) repeatedly wailed and mourned— 'Oh dear father! Oh the compassionate one. Where have you gone leaving me behind? (15). Oh the valorous one with strong, victorious arms! I have been orphaned. Who will shower his love and affection on me any more?' Then Sita and Laxman also began lamenting and mourning a great deal (16).

वसिष्ठः शान्तवचनैः शमयामास तां शुचम्। ततो मन्दाकिनीं गत्वा स्नात्वा ते वीतकल्मषाः ।। 17 ।।
राज्ञे ददुर्जलं तत्र सर्वे ते जलकाङ्क्षिणे। पिण्डान्निर्वापयामास रामो लक्ष्मणसंयुतः ।। 18 ।।

vasiṣṭhaḥ śāntavacanaiḥ śamayāmāsa tāṃ śucam /
tato mandākinīṃ gatvā snātvā te vītakalmaṣāḥ //

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rājñe dadurjalaṃ tatra sarve te jalakāṅkṣiṇe /
piṇḍānnirvāpayāmāsa rāmo lakṣmaṇasaṁyutaḥ //

Then sage Vashistha calmed down their mental agitations and perplexities by a tranquil and soothing voice. Then all the people went to river Mandakini and purified themselves by bathing in it (17). There, all of them offered oblations of water to the thirsty soul of king Dashrath while Sri Ram along with Laxman did the last rite called 'Pinda Daan' (a ritual for dead ancestors wherein rounded balls made of cereals are offered to them (18).

इङ्गुदीफलपिण्याकरचितान्मधुसम्प्लुतान्। वयं यदन्नाः पितरस्तदन्नाः स्मृतिनोदिताः।। 19।।
इति दुःखाश्रुपूर्णाक्षः पुनः स्नात्वा गृहं ययौ। सर्वे रुदित्वा सुचिरं स्नात्वा जग्मुस्तदाश्रमम्।।20।।

iṅgudīphalapiṇyākaracitānmadhusamplutān /
vayaṃ yadannāḥ pitarastadannāḥ smṛtinoditāḥ //
iti dukhāśru pūrṇākṣaḥ punaḥ snātvā gṛhaṃ yayau /
sarve ruditvā suciraṃ snātvā jagmustadāśramam //

'That food which is liked by us is also liked by our ancestors—this is the sanction of the Vedas', saying this, they made 'Pindaas' of 'Ingadiphal' (a tree called Hingot and its fruits; the Indigo Vat plant), poured honey on them and donated those balls in a ritual called 'Pinda Daan' (19). Thereafter, with tearful eyes, they bathed again and returned to the hermitage. Others also wept and mourned for a long time, bathed in the river, and ultimately returned back to the hermitage (20).

तस्मिंस्तु दिवसे सर्वे उपवासं प्रचक्रिरे। ततः परेद्युर्विमले स्नात्वा मन्दाकिनीजले।। 21।।
उपविष्टं समागम्य भरतो राममब्रवीत्। राम राम महाभाग स्वात्मानमभिषेचय।। 22।।

tasmiṁstu divase sarve upavāsaṃ pracakrire /
tataḥ paredyurvimale snātvā mandākinījale //
upaviṣṭaṃ samāgamya bharato rāmamabravīt /
rāma rāma mahābhāga svātmānamabhiṣecaya //

That day everybody fasted. On the second day, after bathing in the pure waters of river Mandakini (21), Bharat went to Sri Ram who was sitting in the hermitage, and said, 'Oh Ram, Oh Ram! Oh the most fortunate and gracious one! Get yourself crowned (or anointed to the throne of Ayodhya) (22).

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राज्यं पालय पित्र्यं ते ज्येष्ठस्त्वं मे पिता तथा। क्षत्रियाणामयं धर्मो यत्प्रजापरिपालनम्।। 23।।
इष्ट्वा यज्ञैर्बहुविधैः पुत्रानुत्पाद्य तन्तवे। राज्ये पुत्रं समारोप्य गमिष्यसि ततो वनम्।। 24।।

rājyaṃ pālaya pitryaṃ te jyeṣṭhastvaṃ me pitā tathā /
kṣatriyāṇāmayaṃ dharmo yatprajāparipālanam //
iṣṭvā yajñairbahuvidhaiḥ putrānutpādya tantave /
rājye putraṃ samāropya gamiṣyasi tato vanam //

The father's kingdom belongs to you; you should sustain (take care of) it. You are our elder brother, hence are equivalent to a father. To look after the subjects (or dependants) is the most important duty for a Kshatriya (23). Hence, you should (rule over the kingdom and) perform various sanctioned religious sacrifices (or make all possible efforts in this direction), and after that bring forth sons to propagate the clan, and only when they grow up and are crowned on the throne, you should go to the forest (and not now) (24).

इदानीं वनवासस्य कालो नैव प्रसीद मे। मातुर्मे दुष्कृतं किञ्चित्स्मर्तुं नार्हसि पाहि नः।। 25।।
इत्युक्त्वा चरणौ भ्रातुः शिरस्याधाय भक्तितः। रामस्य पुरतः साक्षाद्दण्डवत्पतितो भुवि।।26।।

idānīṃ vanavāsasya kālo naiva prasīda me /
māturme duṣkṛtaṃ kiñcitsmartuṃ nārhasi pāhi naḥ //
ityuktvā caraṇau bhrātuḥ śirasyādhāya bhaktitaḥ /
rāmasya purataḥ sākṣāddaṇḍavatpatito bhuvi //

Now is not the time for living in a forest; be pleased and merciful towards me. Whatever is the crime of my mother, do forget it and protect us' (25). Saying this, he put his head affectionately on the feet of his brother and fell down before him like a stick (i.e. prostrated before him most humbly (26).

उत्थाप्य राघवः शीघ्रमारोप्याङ्केऽतिभक्तितः। उवाच भरतं रामः स्नेहार्द्रनयनः शनैः।। 27।।
शृणु वत्स प्रवक्ष्यामि त्वयोक्तं यत्तथैव तत्। किन्तु मामब्रवीत्तातो नव वर्षाणि पञ्च च।।28।।
उषित्वा दण्डकारण्ये पुरं पश्चात्समाविश। इदानीं भरतायेदं राज्यं दत्तं मयाखिलम्।। 29।।

utthāpya rāghavaḥ śīghramāropyāṅke'tibhaktitaḥ /
uvāca bharataṃ rāmaḥ snehārdranayanaḥ śanaiḥ //
śṛṇu vatsa pravakṣyāmi tvayoktaṃ yattathaiva tat /
kintu māmabravīttāto nava varṣāṇi pañca ca //
uṣitvā daṇḍakāraṇye puraṃ paścātsamāviśa /
idānīṃ bharatāyedaṃ rājyaṃ dattaṃ mayākhilam //

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Raghav (Sri Ram) hastily picked him up and most endearingly seated him on his laps, filled his eyes with tears of love and joy, and spoke to him slowly and softly (27), 'Oh son (brother)! Listen to what I have to say. What you say is absolutely alright and true. But the father had ordered me that 'I should live in the Dandakaranya forest for 14 years before coming to Ayodhya. Presently, I am giving this kingdom to Bharat' (28-29).

ततः पित्रैव सुव्यक्तं राज्यं दत्तं तवैव हि। दण्डकारण्यराज्यं मे दत्तं पित्रा तथैव च।। 30।।
अतः पितुर्वचः कार्यमावाभ्यामतियत्नतः। पितुर्वचनमुल्लङ्घ्य स्वतन्त्रो यस्तु वर्तते।। 31।।
स जीवन्नेव मृतको देहान्ते निरयं व्रजेत्। तस्माद्राज्यं प्रशाधि त्वं वयं दण्डकपालकाः।।32।।

tataḥ pitraiva suvyaktaṃ rājyaṃ dattaṃ tavaiva hi /
daṇḍakāraṇyarājyaṃ me dattaṃ pitrā tathaiva ca //
ataḥ piturvacaḥ kāryamāvābhyāmatiyatnataḥ /
piturvacanamullaṅghya svatantro yastu vartate //
sa jīvanneva mṛtako dehānte nirayaṃ vrajet /
tasmādrājyaṃ praśādhi tvaṃ vayaṃ daṇḍakapālakāḥ //

Hence, evidently, he has given the reign (of Ayodhya) to you, and similarly he has given the reign of the Dandakaranya forest to me (30). Therefore, both of us must strive to keep the words of our father. A person who violates (i.e. does not obey) the words of his father (31) is as good as dead even though he is living, and he goes to hell when he dies. So, you should look after the kingdom and I shall protect (take care of) the Dandakaranya forest' (32).

भरतस्त्वब्रवीद्रामं कामुको मूढधीः पिता। स्त्रीजितो भ्रान्तहृदय उन्मत्तो यदि वक्ष्यति।
तत्सत्यमिति न ग्राह्यं भ्रान्तवाक्यं यथा सुधीः।। 33।।

bharatastvabravīdrāmaṃ kāmuko mūḍhadhīḥ pitā /
strījito bhrāntahṛdaya unmatto yadi vakṣyati /
tatsatyamiti na grāhyaṃ bhrāntavākyaṃ yathā sudhīḥ //

33. Bharat replied to Sri Ram, 'Even if the father—under the influence of lust and infatuation with a woman, ignorantly and most foolishly, due to the influence of illusions, or fickleness and waywardness of the mind, and being arrogant and haughty—had said so, it should still not be treated as rightful and truthful (i.e. justified, proper, sanctified and inviolable) even as wise people do not respect

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(or pay attention to) the words of ignorant, foolish, deluded and wicked people with a fickle, wayward mind' (33).

[Note :—A shining example of Bharat's sincerity and innocence. See also verse nos. 39-40. The way he has held even his father with contempt and disgust, and the words he has used for his own father, show that for Bharat, righteousness, probity, propriety, morality and upright code of behaviour was paramount, even if that meant disobeying the orders of his own father. It was highly improper that his elder brother— who was revered by the people in general, who was so loving and caring, and who had sterling characters and virtues—be sent to the forest at the behest of a selfish and foolish woman, and he be crowned the king on a throne which rightfully belonged to the former. Bharat's actions in refusing the crown made him immortal in the annals of history.]

श्रीराम उवाच

न स्त्रीजितः पिता ब्रूयान्न कामी नैव मूढधीः। पूर्वं प्रतिश्रुतं तस्य सत्यवादी ददौ भयात्।। 34।।
असत्याद्भीतिरधिका महतां नरकादपि। करोमीत्यहमप्येतत्सत्यं तस्यै प्रतिश्रुतम्।। 35।।

śrīrāma uvāca

na strījitaḥ pitā brūyānna kāmī naiva mūḍhadhiḥ /
pūrvaṃ prātiśrutaṃ tasya satyavādī dadau bhayāt //
asatyādbhītiradhikā mahatāṃ narakādapi /
karomītyahamapyetatsatyaṃ tasyai pratiśrutam //

Sri Ram said—'The father has not said this under the influence of any woman, lustfulness and lasciviousness, or under any foolish illusions. That truthful and righteous one had given these two orders to uphold the earlier promises/vows he had made (34). Great people are more afraid of telling a lie than going to hell. Even I have truthfully made an oath to him, saying 'I shall do it, as you wish' (35).

कथं वाक्यमहं कुर्यामसत्यं राघवो हि सन्। इत्युदीरितमाकर्ण्य रामस्य भरतोऽब्रवीत्।। 36।।
तथैव चीरवसनो वने वत्स्यामि सुव्रत। चतुर्दश समास्त्वं तु राज्यं कुरु यथासुखम्।। 37।।

kathaṃ vākyamahaṃ kuryāmasatyaṃ rāghavo hi san/
ityudīritamākarṇya rāmasya bharato'bravīt //
tathaiva cīravasano vane vatsyāmi suvrate /
caturdaśa samāstvaṃ tu rājyaṃ kuru yathāsukham //

Tell me, being born in the clan of Raghu, how can I turn against my own words?' Hearing these words of Sri Ram, Bharat replied (36),

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'Oh the upholder of truthfulness, righteousness and promises! According to the words of the father, I shall live in the forest for 14 years attired in clothes made from bark of trees (birch), while you should comfortably enjoy the kingdom' (37).

[Note :—Bharat was correct when he said 'according to the words of the father'. Dashrath had granted the two boons to Kaikeyi a long time back when he had no sons. At that time he did not imagine how these two boons were to prove to be his undoing. When Kaikeyi exploited those two boons asking for Bharat's anointment and Sri Ram's exile, Dashrath was aghast, stumped and dumbfounded. He did not know what to say. He had never told Sri Ram directly, expressly, in explicit terms to go to the forest, nor had he lived long enough to ask Bharat to ascend the throne. In fact, he had expressly ordered Sri Ram to tie him up and take the kingdom forcefully (see Ayodhya Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 69-71). So, Bharat was correct when he said that Dashrath had never truthfully and honestly intended to send Sri Ram to the forest and enthrone Bharat in his stead. Dashrath was so shell-shocked at Kaikeyi's ruthless, incongruous and ridiculous demands that he was rendered speechless and in a state of numbed indecisiveness; he just could not muster courage even to sternly warn her to stop meddling in state affairs. After all, it was a mighty empire of that time, and its emperor cannot be appointed at the whims of a woman. This fact is very clear even to a casual reader. So, the sons should carry out the real intentions and wishes of their father, rather than what was forced upon him to agree against his wishes. Sri Ram's exile was made under duress, not under a free will. Hence, it was, for all practical purposes, null and void, as it were.

There is another way of looking at Bharat's logic. The two brothers loved each other so much, and their characters matched each other so much, that there was no apparent difference between the two, except them having two physical bodies. The pain which Ram suffered was also replicated by Bharat when he finally returned to Ayodhya, and instead of living a life of a king, he spent his days in severe austerities and penances at a place called Nandigram where he installed the sandals of the Lord which he had brought with him, and carried out his designated royal duties as a servant of the Lord. This verse is a stellar example of brotherhood and love; it shows that the orders given to Ram by his father were treated as the de-facto orders given by him to Bharat, and vice versa. For the two brothers, it did not matter who carried them out, as long as they were carried out.]

श्रीराम उवाच

पित्रा दत्तं तवैवैतद्राज्यं मह्यं वनं ददौ। व्यत्ययं यद्यहं कुर्यामसत्यं पूर्ववत् स्थितम्॥ 38॥

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śrīrāma uvāca

pitrā dattaṃ tavaivaitadrājyaṃ mahyaṃ vanaṃ dadau /
vyatyayaṃ yadyahaṃ kuryāmasatyaṃ pūrvavat sthitam //

Sri Ram said, 'Father has given you the kingdom, while giving the forest to me. If I now do the opposite, it will be tantamount to being untruthful (to my words, for notwithstanding what you say, I have said this much to my father while he was still alive.)' (38).

[Note :—Sri Ram justifies his coming to the forest and interpretations of the vows of Dashrath in Ayodhya Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 60-62.]

भरत उवाच

अहमप्यागमिष्यामि सेवे त्वां लक्ष्मणो यथा। नोचेत्प्रायोपवेशेन त्यजाम्येतत्कलेवरम्॥ 39॥
इत्येवं निश्चयं कृत्वा दर्भानास्तीर्य चातपे। मनसापि विनिश्चित्य प्राङ्मुखोपविवेश सः॥40॥
भरतस्यापि निर्बन्धं दृष्ट्वा रामोऽतिविस्मितः। नेत्रान्तसंज्ञां गुरवे चकार रघुनन्दनः॥ 41॥

bharata uvāca

ahamapyāgamiṣyāmi seve tvāṃ lakṣmaṇo yathā /
nocetprāyopaveśena tyajāmyetatkalevaram //
ityevaṃ niścayaṃ kṛtvā darbhānāstīrya cātape /
manasāpi viniścitya prāṅmukhopaviveśa saḥ //
bharatasyāpi nirbandhaṃ dṛṣṭvā rāmo'tivismitaḥ /
netrāntasaṁjñāṃ gurave cakāra raghunandanaḥ //

Bharat replied, 'I shall too come to the forest and serve you like Laxman does. Otherwise, I shall leave food and water (i.e. observe severe fasting) and die' (39). Having expressed his firm determination and deciding to implement it, he spread some grass on the floor and sat down on it facing east (in a meditative posture) (40). Seeing such strong determination and firm resolve of Bharat, Sri Ram was dumbfounded and perplexed. He signaled his Guru (sage Vashistha) with his sideways glance (to intervene and save the situation from getting worse) (41).

[Note—Bharat was justified in invoking Laxman's going to the forest with Lord Ram while arguing his case. This is because the king had never asked Laxman or Sita to go the forest. So if Laxman can go against the wishes of the father, why couldn't Bharat?]

एकान्ते भरतं प्राह वसिष्ठो ज्ञानिनां वरः। वत्स गुह्यं शृणुष्वेदं मम वाक्यात्सुनिश्चितम्॥ 42॥

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रामो नारायणः साक्षाद्ब्रह्मणा याचितः पुरा। रावणस्य वधार्थाय जातो दशरथात्मजः।।43।।

ekānte bharataṃ prāha vasiṣṭho jñānināṃ varaḥ /
vatsa guhyaṃ śṛṇuṣvedaṃ mama vākyātsuniścitam //
rāmo nārāyaṇaḥ sākṣādbrahmaṇā yācitaḥ purā /
rāvaṇasya vadhārthāya jāto daśarathātmajaḥ //

Then sage Vashistha, who was the best among the wise ones, took Bharat aside to a lonely place, and said, 'Oh son! What I am going to say now is secret, most truthful and a serious fact. Listen to it (42). Lord Ram is Lord Narayan (Vishnu) himself. In an earlier time, he had promised Lord Brahma to slay Ravana, and for that purpose he has taken birth in the household of Dashrath as his son (43).

योगमायापि सीतेति जाता जनकनन्दिनी। शेषोऽपि लक्ष्मणो जातो राममन्वेति सर्वदा।।44।।
रावणं हन्तुकामास्ते गमिष्यन्ति न संशयः। कैकेय्या वरदानादि सद्यन्निष्ठुरभाषणम्।।45।।
सर्वं देवकृतं नोचेदेवं सा भाषयेत्कथम्। तस्मात्त्यजाग्रहं तात रामस्य विनिवर्तने।।46।।

yogamāyāpi sīteti jātā janakanandinī /
śeṣo'pi lakṣmaṇo jāto rāmamanveti sarvadā //
rāvaṇaṃ hantukāmāste gamiṣyanti na saṁśayaḥ /
kaikeyyā varadānādi yadyanniṣṭhurabhāṣaṇam //
sarvaṃ devakṛtaṃ nocedevaṃ sā bhāṣayetkatham /
tasmāttyajāgrahaṃ tāta rāmasya vinivartane //

Similarly, his 'Yog-Maya' (the delusion creating powers of the Lord; his cosmic infinite powers of creation, sustenance and destruction) has taken birth as the daughter of Janak, named as Sita, while the legendary Sheshnath (the 10-hooded serpent upon whom Lord Vishnu reclines in the celestial milky ocean called Kshirsagar) has manifested himself as Laxman to follow him and serve him. The Lord wants (i.e. has to) kill Ravana, so he shall go to the forest for sure. Kaikeyi's boons and other cruel deeds and words (45) are the handiwork of Gods (i.e. were done by her at the inspiration of Gods). Otherwise, how dare could she say such words? So, oh dear, you should leave your insistence on Sri Ram's return (to Ayodhya) (46).

निवर्तस्व महासैन्यैर्मातृभिः सहितः पुरम्। रावणं सकुलं हत्वा शीघ्रमेवागमिष्यति।।47।।
इति श्रुत्वा गुरोर्वाक्यं भरतो विस्मयान्वितः। गत्वा समीपं रामस्य विस्मयोत्फुल्ललोचनः।।48।।
पादुके देहि राजेन्द्र राज्याय तव पूजिते। तयोः सेवां करोम्येव यावदागमनं तव।।49।।

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nivartasva mahāsainyairmātṛbhiḥ sahitaḥ puram /
rāvaṇaṃ sakulaṃ hatvā śīghramevāgamiṣyati //
iti śrutvā gurorvākyaṃ bharato vismayānvitaḥ /
gatvā samīpaṃ rāmasya vismayotphullalocanaḥ //
pāduke dehi rājendra rājyāya tava pūjite /
tayoḥ sevāṃ karomyeva yāvadāgamanaṃ tave //

And you must return back to Ayodhya with your mothers and the huge army. Sri Ram, after having killed Ravana, would come there soon' (47). Hearing these astounding, strange and mysterious words of his Guru, Bharat was filled with extreme wonderment, perplexity and astonishment. He went near Sri Ram and said (48), 'Oh great king! Please give me your sandals which are adored, honoured, worshipped and revered by the world for the purpose of administration of the kingdom (for the interim period while you are in the forest). Till the time you come back, I shall keep on serving them on your behalf' (49).

[Note :—The question which arises here is if sage Vashistha knew the real reason for Sri Ram's exile and that no hindrance must be put in it, why couldn't he explain the position to Bharat at Ayodhya itself and stop him from taking all the trouble of going to Chitrakoot. In my view, the possible reasons are these, viz. (i) He wanted to establish the innocence of Bharat in the eyes of the people of the kingdom as well as other sages and seers; (ii) he wished to wait till the time he got specific instructions from the Lord himself; (iii) being wisest among the wise ones, he was aware of the dictum that 'one should not open one's mouth unless the opportune time comes'; (iv) had he prevented Bharat from proceeding to Chitrakoot, many eyebrows would have been raised on his own (Vashistha's) bonafides and integrity, and (v) Sri Ram's sandals would not have been brought and put on the throne so as to prevent any covert attempt to usurp power by Bharat or anyone else in due course of time when the initial emotions subsided, and greed and dazzle of kinghood might have incited them to do the unthinkable in some remote time in the future.]

इत्युक्त्वा पादुके दिव्ये योजयामास पादयोः । रामस्य ते ददौ रामो भरतायातिभक्तितः ।। 50 ।।
गृहीत्वा पादुके दिव्ये भरतो रत्नभूषिते। रामं पुनः परिक्रम्य प्रणनाम पुनः पुनः ।। 51 ।।

ityuktvā pāduke divye yojayāmāsa pādayoḥ /
rāmasya te dadau rāmo bharatāyātibhaktitaḥ //
gṛhītvā pāduke divye bharato ratnabhūṣite /
rāmaṃ punaḥ parikramya praṇanāma punaḥ punaḥ //

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Saying this, Bharat made him wear a pair of divine, magnificent and radiant sandals that he had taken with him from Ayodhya. After symbolically wearing them as a token, and seeing Bharat's great devotion and sincerity, Sri Ram took them off and returned them to him (50). Bharat took those gem-studded divine and magnificent sandals, circumambulated Sri Ram most reverentially, and then repeatedly bowed before him (51).

[Note :—This verse nos. 50-51 answers the query as to how come Sri Ram managed to give the sandals to Bharat when he was supposed to walk barefoot like a hermit on the ground. He was indeed barefoot. The sandals were offered on the spot by Bharat and taken back by him. The next question that arises is—were the sandals brought from Ayodhya specially for this purpose? Well, the plausible answer is that since sage Vashistha knew in advance what was to happen at Chitrakoot, being all-knowing, he must have come fully prepared. Further, Bharat must have brought these sandals in preparation for Sri Ram's crowning as king in the forest. For then, he must need some footwear to suit his stature.]

भरतः पुनराहेदं भक्त्या गद्गदया गिरा। नवपञ्चसमान्ते तु प्रथमे दिवसे यदि॥ 52॥
नागमिष्यसि चेद्राम प्रविशामि महानलम्। बाढमित्येव तं रामो भरतं संन्यवर्तयत्॥ 53॥
ससैन्यः सवसिष्ठश्च शत्रुघ्नसहितः सुधीः। मातृभिर्मन्त्रिभिः सार्धं गमनायोपचक्रमे॥ 54॥

bharataḥ punarāhedaṃ bhaktyā gadgadayā girā /
navapañcasamānte tu prathame divase yadi //
nāgamiṣyasi cedrāma praviśāmi mahānalam /
bāḍhamityeva taṃ rāmo bharataṃ saṁnyavartayat.h //
sasainyaḥ savasiṣṭhaśca śatrughnasahitaḥ sudhīḥ /
mātṛbhirmantribhiḥ sārdhaṃ gamanāyopacakrame //

He spoke with a voice chocked with devotional and affectionate emotions—'If you do not reach Ayodhya on the very first day after the expiry of fourteen years (52), I shall enter a huge sacrificial fire'. Sri Ram said 'alright' and bid farewell to Bharat (53). Then, the wise one (i.e. Bharat) started making preparations for departure (from Chitrakoot) along with the entire army, sage Vashistha, Shatrughan and all the mothers and ministers (54).

कैकेयी राममेकान्ते स्रवन्नेत्रजलाकुला। प्राञ्जलिः प्राह हे राम तव राज्यविघातनम्॥ 55॥
कृतं मया दुष्टधिया मायामोहितचेतसा। क्षमस्व मम दौरात्म्यं क्षमासारा हि साधवः॥ 56॥

kaikeyī rāmamekānte sravannetrajalākulā /
prāñjaliḥ prāha he rāma tava rājyavighātanam //

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kṛtaṃ mayā duṣṭadhiyā māyāmohitacetasā /
kṣamasva mama daurātmyaṃ kṣamāsārā hi sādhavaḥ //

At about this time, Kaikeyi met Sri Ram at a secluded place, and prayed to him most tearfully with palms joined together in submission, 'Oh Sri Ram! Being misled by (or being under the spell of) the delusions and deception creating powers of your Maya, this wicked me had created hurdles in your anointment. So you should excuse and forgive me for my wickedness, my sins and my misdemeanors, because saintly people are always forgiving by nature (55-56).

त्वं साक्षाद्विष्णुरव्यक्तः परमात्मा सनातनः। मायामानुषरूपेण मोहयस्यखिलं जगत्।
त्वयैव प्रेरितो लोकः कुरुते साध्वसाधु वा।। 57।।
त्वदधीनमिदं विश्वमस्वतन्त्रं करोति किम्। यथा कृत्रिमनर्तक्यो नृत्यन्ति कुहकेच्छया।। 58।।

tvaṃ sākṣādviṣṇuravyaktaḥ paramātmā sanātanaḥ /
māyāmānuṣarūpeṇa mohayasyakhilaṃ jagat /
tvayaiva prerito lokaḥ kurute sādhvasādhu vā //
tvadadhīnamidaṃ viśvamasvatantraṃ karoti kim /
yathā kṛtrimanartakyo nṛtyanti kuhakecchayā //

You are the personification of Lord Vishnu himself, are the unmanifest supreme Soul and the eternal Being. You cast a spell of illusion and deception to divert the attention of (or conversely, attract, enchant) the world by your (or towards your) illusionary, false but seemingly true body of a human being. It is at your instance (or inspiration and behest) that people do either good, auspicious and noble deeds, or indulge them selves in doing evil, inauspicious and ignoble deeds (57).

This whole world (creation) is subservient to (subsidiary, subordinate to, dependent on) you. Since it is not independent, it cannot do anything on its own—just as a puppet dances to the tune of the maverick player (i.e. the puppeteer) (58).

त्वदधीना तथा माया नर्तकी बहुरूपिणी। त्वयैव प्रेरिताहं च देवकार्यं करिष्यता।। 59।।
पापिष्ठं पापमनसा कर्माचरमरिन्दम। अद्य प्रतीतोऽसि मम देवानामप्यगोचरः।। 60।।

tvadadhīnā tathā māyā nartakī bahurūpiṇī /
tvayaiva preritāhaṃ ca devakāryaṃ kariṣyatā //
pāpiṣṭhaṃ pāpamanasā karmācaramarindama /
adya pratīto'si mama devānāmapyagocaraḥ //

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In a similar way, this 'Maya' in the form of a 'dancer' assumes different forms (i.e. performs different acts, does different deeds, and creates different illusions, emotions, behaviours, relationships etc.), but is inherently dependent upon you (i.e. your instructions, your wishes). And, oh the vanquisher of enemies, it was your desire to do the work of the Gods that inspired (provoked) me sinner to do this most ignoble, contemptible, sinful and abhorable act with my wicked, corrupt and devilish wisdom (mind which was deluded and corrupted beyond measure). I have come to recognise the truth about you (i.e. your true self)—you are even beyond the comprehension of the mind, intellect and speech of Gods (i.e. they cannot know who you actually are, they cannot describe you). Say then, how can I ever hope to fathom and measure you! (59-60).

पाहि विश्वेश्वरानन्त जगन्नाथ नमोऽस्तु ते। छिन्धि स्नेहमयं पाशं पुत्रवित्तादिगोचरम्।। 61।।
त्वज्ज्ञानानलखड्गेन त्वामहं शरणं गता। कैकेय्या वचनं श्रुत्वा रामः सस्मितमब्रवीत्।।62।।

pāhi viśveśvarānanta jagannātha namo'stu te /
chindhi snehamayaṃ pāśaṃ putravittādigocaram //
tvajjñānānalakhaḍgena tvāmahaṃ śaraṇaṃ gatā /
kaikeyyā vacanaṃ śrutvā rāmaḥ sasmitamabravīt //

Oh Vishweshwar (Lord of the universe/world)! Oh Anant (the eternal and timeless one)! Please save me (from the ignominy and the horrendous sins which I have committed). Oh Jagannath (Lord of the world)! I bow and pay my respects to you. Oh Lord! I am in your refuge/shelter. You must cut (i.e. destroy) my shackles represented by the cravings, love and attachments that I have towards my son and worldly wealth with your sword representing the fire of realization, enlightenment and truthful wisdom'. Hearing these words of sincere remorse and regret indicative of truthful realisation and enlightenment from Kaikeyi, Sri Ram smiled and said (61-62)—

[Note :—(i) As is evident, Kaikeyi came to know about the true nature of Sri Ram just now. How? Apparently, sage Vashistha's advise to Bharat highlighting this aspect of Sri Ram in verse nos. 42-47 above clearly was passed on to her by none other than Bharat himself, for she must have surely accosted him after his sudden capitulation as in verse nos. 48-49. On enquiry, Bharat must have disclosed to his mother what his Guru had told him. Kaikeyi met Sri Ram alone—to hide her shame, to keep the plan of the Gods secret because any hint would have warned the demons

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and alerted them, and might have thrown a spanner in the whole scheme of things, and also to assuage the hurt feelings of Sri Ram if he had any by saying 'sorry'. This is the reason why Sri Ram never expressed any resentment and rancour towards her, but the fact that she has apologised was not known even to Bharat, for he had been cross with her for the rest of his life. Tulsidas has clearly said it in his Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 37. English version by the author of the full text has been published separately. (ii) Verse nos. 56-62 can be called gospel of Kaikeyi.]

यदाह मां महाभागे नानृतं सत्यमेव तत्। मयैव प्रेरिता वाणी तव वक्त्राद्विनिर्गता।। 63।।
देवकार्यार्थसिद्ध्यर्थमत्र दोषः कुतस्तव। गच्छ त्वं हृदि मां नित्यं भावयन्ती दिवानिशम्।।64।।
सर्वत्र विगतस्नेहा मद्भक्त्या मोक्ष्यसेऽचिरात्। अहं सर्वत्र समदृग् द्वेष्यो वा प्रिय एव वा।।65।।

yadāha māṃ mahābhāge nānṛtaṃ satyameva tat /
mayaiva preritā vāṇī tava vaktrādvinirgatā //
devakāryārthasiddhyarthamatra doṣaḥ kutastava /
gaccha tvaṃ hṛdi māṃ nityaṃ bhāvayantī divāniśam //
sarvatra vigatasnehā madbhaktyā mokṣyase'cirāt /
ahaṃ sarvatra samadṛg dveṣyo vā priya eva vā //

Sri Ram replied to Kaikeyi, 'Oh the most fortunate one! Whatever you have said is true, nothing is false. It was at my instance (inspiration), in order to accomplish the work of the Gods that those words had come out of your mouth (63). In this, there is no fault of yours. Now you should go. By remembering (or invoking) me constantly in your heart day and night (64), you would henceforth become free of all affectionate worldly relationships that are misleading and entrapping, or from all and any kind of false and illusionary attachments whatsoever that you might be having towards this transient world (i.e. you shall become detached and dispassionate towards all things mundane and temporary pertaining to the gross and mortal world). By virtue of my dedicated devotion and worship, you would soon attain liberation from all delusions and misconceptions (i.e. from the bondages of this deluding, ensnaring, mortal and mundane world that forces the ignorant creature to fall into an endless cycle of birth and death). I treat all alike; I am equanimous and equal towards all. I don't have any enemy or friend; I have neither anyone who is opposed or inimical to me, nor anyone who is favourable and dear to me (65).

नास्ति मे कल्पकस्येव भजतोऽनुभजाम्यहम्। मन्मायामोहितधियो मामम्ब मनुजाकृतिम्।। 66।।

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सुखदुःखाद्यनुगतं जानन्ति न तु तत्त्वतः। दृष्ट्या मद्गोचरं ज्ञानमुत्पन्नं ते भवापहम्।। 67।।

nāsti me kalpakasyeva bhajato'nubhajāmyaham /
manmāyāmohitadhiyo māmamba manujākṛtim //
sukhaduḥkhādyanugataṃ jānanti na tu tattvataḥ /
diṣṭyā madgocaraṃ jñānamutpannaṃ te bhavāpaham //

Just like a magician (or a maverick artist) not having any personal attachment or detachment with the objects created by his own illusion-creating powers, I too, likewise, do not have either affection/love or malice/ill-will towards anyone. [That is, I treat all in the same way. I know that all that is visible and all the relationships that are conjured up in this world are mirages, and absolutely false and without any substance whatsoever.] Therefore, I take care of all in consonant with (or in accordance with) the way they remember and worship me. Oh mother! Being enchanted and tricked by my delusion creating powers (Maya), the people recognise (think) me to be an ordinary human being. They do not know (realise, recognise) my true nature (form and essence). It is your great fortune that you have come to understand and realise my essential supreme Truth and Reality which can remove the fears of this mundane, deluding world (of birth and death) (66-67).

[Note :—Verse nos. 63-67 can be termed has the gospel of Sri Ram for Kaikeyi.]

स्मरन्ती तिष्ठ भवने लिप्यसे न च कर्मभिः। इत्युक्त्वा सा परिक्रम्य रामं सानन्दविस्मया।। 68।।
प्रणम्य शतशो भूमौ ययौ गेहं मुदान्विता। भरतस्तु सहामात्यैर्मातृभिर्गुरुणा सह।। 69।।
अयोध्यामगमच्छीघ्रं राममेवानुचिन्तयन्। पौरजानपदान् सर्वानयोध्यायामुदारधीः।। 70।।

smarantī tiṣṭha bhavane lipyase na ca karmabhiḥ /
ityuktvā sā parikramya rāmaṃ sānandavismayā //
praṇamya śataśo bhūmau yayau gehaṃ mudānvitā /
bharatastu sahāmātyairmātṛbhirguruṇā saha //
ayodhyāmagamacchīghraṃ rāmamevānucintayan /
paurajānapadān sarvānayodhyāyāmudāradhīḥ //

Keep on remembering me and stay in the house, for by doing this, you shall not be tied to the shackles of deeds and their fruits'. When Sri Ram had said so, Kaikeyi was full of wonderment, perplexity and astonishment (to hear such high words of wisdom for the first time

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from the mouth of Sri Ram, whom till the other day she had been treating with contempt and scorn, and has seen him as a competitor to her son for the throne; these words are a mirror image of what Guru Vashistha had told Bharat in short). She gladly and cheerfully circumambulated him (68), put her head on the ground and bowed before him hundreds of times (literally if not physically), and then most happily, contentedly (without anymore regrets, remorse or rancour at heart) proceeded back to her home. Similarly, Bharat, along with his ministers, mothers and sage Vashistha (69) too departed for Ayodhya with haste, remembering Sri Ram all along the way. The wise Bharat established (rehabilitated) the citizens in the city and the subjects in the various parts of the realm/kingdom in a proper and suitable way (70).

स्थापयित्वा यथान्यायं नन्दिग्रामं ययौ स्वयम्। तत्र सिंहासने नित्यं पादुके स्थाप्य भक्तितः ।। 71 ।।
पूजयित्वा यथा रामं गन्धपुष्पाक्षतादिभिः। राजोपचारैरखिलैः प्रत्यहं नियतव्रतः ।। 72 ।।
फलमूलाशनो दान्तो जटावल्कलधारकः। अधःशायी ब्रह्मचारी शत्रुघ्नसहितस्तदा ।। 73 ।।

sthāpayitvā yathānyāyaṃ nandigrāmaṃ yayau svayam /
tatra siṁhāsane nityaṃ pāduke sthāpya bhaktitaḥ //
pūjayitvā yathā rāmaṃ gandhapuṣpākṣatādibhiḥ /
rājopacārairakhilaiḥ pratyahaṃ niyatavrataḥ //
phalamūlāśano dānto jaṭāvalkaladhārakaḥ /
adhaḥśāyī brahmacārī śatrughnasahitastadā //

Himself he went to Nandigram. There, he respectfully put (enshrined, enthroned, anointed, consecrated) the two sandals on a royal throne (71) and began to worship them daily, with due devotion and sincerity as representatives of Sri Ram, using scented sticks, flowers, offerings (of rice etc.) and other accoutrements necessary for formal royal adorations, honours and tributes. In this manner, Bharat, along with Shatrughan, began to live piously a very austere life—eating fruits and edible roots, restraining his sense organs (i.e. observing self restraint), wearing matted hairs and clothes of birch, sleeping on the ground and observing celibacy, continence and abstinence of the highest order (72-73).

राजकार्याणि सर्वाणि यावन्ति पृथिवीतले। तानि पादुकयोः सम्यङ्निवेदयति राघवः ।। 74 ।।
गणयन् दिवसानेव रामागमनकाङ्क्षया। स्थितो रामार्पितमनाः साक्षाद्ब्रह्ममुनिर्यथा ।। 75 ।।

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rājakāryāṇi sarvāṇi yāvanti pṛthivītale /
tāni pādukayoḥ samyaṅnivedayati rāghavaḥ //
gaṇayan divasāneva rāmāgamanakāṅkṣayā /
sthito rāmārpitamanāḥ sākṣādbrahmamuniryathā //

Whatever administrative work of the earth (land, kingdom) came his way, Raghav (Bharat) used to offer them as a petition (i.e. placed it before) the sandals of Sri Ram for disposal (i.e. for instructions in the form of inspirational guidance) (74). In this way, waiting out the period of exile, counting each passing day patiently but anxiously and eagerly, he fixed his attention on Sri Ram and spent his days like a truly attained sage of the stature of Brahm personified (75).

रामस्तु चित्रकूटाद्रौ वसन्मुनिभिरावृतः। सीतया लक्ष्मणेनापि किञ्चित्कालमुपावसत्।। 76।।
नागराश्च सदा यान्ति रामदर्शनलालसाः। चित्रकूटस्थितं ज्ञात्वा सीतया लक्ष्मणेन च।। 77।।

rāmastu citrakūṭādrau vasanmunibhirāvṛtaḥ /
sītayā lakṣmaṇenāpi kiñcitkālamupāvasat //
nāgarāśca sadā yānti rāmadarśanalālasāḥ /
citrakūṭasthitaṃ jñātvā sītayā lakṣmaṇena ca //

Meanwhile, here in Chitrakoot, surrounded by sages and hermits, Sri Ram spent some more days with Sita and Laxman (76). Hearing about Sri Ram dwelling in Chitrakoot with Sita and Laxman, the inhabitants of nearby towns, villages and hamlets always used to come there with a desire to have his holy Darshan (divine and august sight) (77).

दृष्ट्वा तज्जनसम्बाधं रामस्तत्याज तं गिरिम्। दण्डकारण्यगमने कार्यमप्यनुचिन्तयन्।। 78।।
अन्वगात्सीतया भ्रात्रा ह्यत्रेराश्रममुत्तमम्। सर्वत्र सुखसंवासं जनसम्बाधवर्जितम्।। 79।।

dṛṣṭvā tajjanasambādhaṃ rāmastatyāja taṃ girim /
daṇḍakāraṇyagamane kāryamapyanucintayan //
anvagātsītayā bhrātrā hyatrerāśramamuttamam /
sarvatra sukhasaṁvāsaṃ janasambādhavarjitam //

Sri Ram left that mountain when he saw the daily crowd as well as upon the consideration of the very purpose of his coming to Dandakaranya forest (which was to kill the demons and Ravana, to free the earth from their burden, as well as to provide his divine glimpse and consequential emancipation to all the sages, hermits and

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ascetics who had been doing severe penances and austerities, waiting for the auspicious moment when the Lord would come and meet them and pave the way for their emancipation and salvation) (78).

Starting from there, he, along with Sita and Laxman, came to sage Atri's hermitage which was most excellent (i.e. most auspicious and suitable in ambience for spiritual pursuits) and was totally devoid of any habitation (i.e. it was absolutely secluded and lonely), but which was comfortable in all possible ways (79).

[Note—Sage Atri's hermitage was in sharp contrast with other hermitages for it was lonely and secluded, while in other cases hermits used to live in a community of their likes.]

गत्वा मुनिमुपासीनं भासयन्तं तपोवनम्। दण्डवत्प्रणिपत्याह रामोऽहमभिवादये।। 80।।
पितुराज्ञां पुरस्कृत्य दण्डकाननमागतः। वनवासमिषेणापि धन्योऽहं दर्शनात्तव।। 81।।

gatvā munimupāsīnaṃ bhāsayantaṃ tapovanam /
daṇḍavatpraṇipatyāha rāmo'hamabhivādaye //
piturājñāṃ puraskṛtya daṇḍakānanamāgataḥ /
vanavāsamiṣeṇāpi dhanyo'haṃ darśanāttava //

Reaching there, he saw the sage sitting in his hermitage and illuminating the entire 'Tapovan' (literally the forest surrounding him where severe penances could be done) with his effulgent divine radiance. He went near the exalted sage, prostrated before him to pay respects, and said, 'I, Ram, give you my respect (80). I have come to Dandakaranya on the orders of my father. Presently, even on the excuse of wandering in the forest, I feel extremely fortunate and privileged to have your divine Darshan (i.e. am very fortunate to meet you)' (81).

श्रुत्वा रामस्य वचनं रामं ज्ञात्वा हरिं परम्। पूजयामास विधिवद्भक्त्या परमया मुनिः।। 82।।
वन्यैः फलैः कृतातिथ्यमुपविष्टं रघूत्तमम्। सीतां च लक्ष्मणं चैव संतुष्टो वाक्यमब्रवीत्।। 83।।

śrutvā rāmasya vacanaṃ rāmaṃ jñātvā hariṃ param /
pūjayāmāsa vidhivadbhaktyā paramayā muniḥ //
vanyaiḥ phalaiḥ kṛtātithyamupaviṣṭaṃ raghūttamam /
sītāṃ ca lakṣmaṇaṃ caiva saṁtuṣṭo vākyamabravīt //

Hearing these words of Sri Ram and knowing him to be the personification of the supreme Lord himself, the exalted sage welcomed him reverentially and performed his worship with immense

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devotion (82). Then he offered his exalted guests fruits grown in the forest as refreshment. Having thus formally welcomed the Lord, the sage most devotionally addressed him who was the most exalted one in Raghu's clan (i.e. Sri Ram) as well as Sita and Laxman, who were by then seated comfortably on a mat in front of the sage (83)—

भार्या मेऽतीव संवृद्धा ह्यनसूयेति विश्रुता। तपश्चरन्ती सुचिरं धर्मज्ञा धर्मवत्सला।। 84।।
अन्तस्तिष्ठति तां सीता पश्यत्वरिनिषूदन। तथेति जानकीं प्राह रामो राजीवलोचनः।। 85।।
गच्छ देवीं नमस्कृत्य शीघ्रमेहि पुनः शुभे। तथेति रामवचनं सीता चापि तथाकरोत्।। 86।।

bhāryā me'tīva saṁvṛddhā hyanasūyeti viśrutā /
tapaścarantī suciraṃ dharmajñā dharmavatsalā //
antastiṣṭhati tāṃ sītā paśyatvariniṣūdana /
tatheti jānakīṃ prāha rāmo rājīvalocanaḥ //
gaccha devīṃ namaskṛtya śīghramehi punaḥ śubhe /
tatheti rāmavacanaṃ sītā cāpi tathākarot //

'My wife Anusuiya is famously known by this name. She is very old, has been doing Tapa (severe austerities, penances and fasting etc.) for a long time, knows what is Dharma (righteousness, ethics, morality, propriety, probity, noble conduct and thought) and has great respect for it (84). Presently, she is inside the hut. Oh Sri Ram, the vanquisher of enemies—let Sita meet (see) her'. Then the lotus-eyed Sri Ram said 'alright' and told Sita (85), 'Oh the auspicious one! Go and pay your respects to Devi Anusuiya and come back soon'. Sita agreed readily and carried out the orders of Sri Ram (86).

दण्डवत्पतितामग्रे सीतां दृष्ट्वातिहृष्टधीः। अनसूया समालिङ्ग्य वत्से सीतेति सादरम्।। 87।।
दिव्ये ददौ कुण्डले द्वे निर्मिते विश्वकर्मणा। दुकूले द्वे ददौ तस्यै निर्मले भक्तिसंयुता।। 88।।

daṇḍavatpatitāmagre sītāṃ dṛṣṭvātihṛṣṭhadhīḥ /
anasūyā samāliṅgya vatse sīteti sādaram //
divye dadau kuṇḍale dve nirmite viśvakarmaṇā /
dukūle dve dadau tasyai nirmale bhaktisaṁyutā //

When Anusuiya saw Sita lying prostrate before her like a stick, she was thrilled and filled with exhilaration and extreme delight, and exclaimed 'Oh daughter Sita' and respectfully picked her up and embraced her. She gave her two ear-rings and two clean silk Saris made by Vishwakarma (the Smith of Gods) (87-88).

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अङ्गरागं च सीतायै ददौ दिव्यं शुभानना। न त्यक्ष्यतेऽङ्गरागेण शोभा त्वां कमलानने।। 89।।
पातिव्रत्यं पुरस्कृत्य राममन्वेहि जानकि। कुशली राघवो यातु त्वया सह पुनर्गृहम्।। 90।।

aṅgarāgaṃ ca sītāyai dadau divyaṃ śubhānanā /
na tyakṣyate'ṅgarāgeṇa śobhā tvāṃ kamalānane //
pātivratyaṃ puraskṛtya rāmamanvehi jānaki /
kuśalī rāghavo yātu tvayā saha punargṛham //

The auspicious lady (Anusuiya) also gave Sita divine, magnificent and auspicious 'Angarag' and said, 'Oh lotus-faced one! By smearing this Angarag (a sort of herbal cream) on your body, its beauty and youthfulness shall never decrease or decay (89). Oh Janki! You should always follow the vows of a loyal, honourable and chaste wife, and always follow Sri Ram. Let Raghav (Sri Ram) return home with all welfares, along with you!' (90).

भोजयित्वा यथान्यायं रामं सीतासमन्वितम्। लक्ष्मणं च तदा रामं पुनः प्राह कृताञ्जलिः।। 91।।
राम त्वमेव भुवनानि विधाय तेषां संरक्षणाय सुरमानुषतिर्यगादीन्।
देहान्बिभर्षि न च देहगुणैर्विलिप्तस्त्वत्तो बिभेत्यखिलमोहकरी च माया।। 92।।

bhojayitvā yathānyāyaṃ rāmaṃ sītāsamanvitam /
lakṣmaṇaṃ ca tadā rāmaṃ punaḥ prāha kṛtāñjaliḥ //
rāma tvameva bhuvanāni vidhāya
teṣāṃ saṁrakṣaṇāya suramānuṣatiryagādīn /
dehānbibharṣi na ca dehaguṇairvilipta-
stvatto bibhetyakhilamohakarī ca māyā //

After that, she systematically (i.e. in a proper way) served meals to Sri Ram along with Laxman and Sita. Then she folded her hands and said to Sri Ram (91), 'Oh Sri Ram! After having created all the Bhuvans (worlds), you sustain and take care of them by assuming the various forms of different Gods, humans and lowly creatures. But nevertheless, you are not attached or involved with, engrossed or indulgent in, or clung to any of those forms (i.e. you are not at all affected by the various incumbent characteristic qualities or attributes of these various forms, nor do you identify your true self with them; you remain detached and aloof from them). Maya, which is capable of enchanting and keeping the whole world under its spell and its thrall, too is afraid of (i.e. annoying and antagonising) you' (92).

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ध्यान

सरयूतीर मन्दारवेदिकापङ्कजासने। श्यामं वीरासनासीनं ज्ञानमुद्रोपशोभितम्।।
वामोरुन्यस्ततद्धस्तं सीतालक्ष्मणसंयुतम्। अवेक्षमाणमात्मानं मन्मथामिततेजसम्।।
शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं केवलं मोक्षकांक्षया। चिन्तयेत् परमात्मानमतुलक्षं जपेन्मनुम्।।
(नारदपु० पूर्व० तृ० 73/106-108)

dhyāna

sarayūtīra mandāravedikāpaṅkajāsane /
śyāmaṃ vīrāsanāsīnaṃ jñānamudropaśobhitam //
vāmorunyastataddhastaṃ sītālakṣmaṇasaṁyutam /
avekṣamāṇamātmānaṃ manmathāmitatejasam //
śuddhasphaṭikasaṁkāśaṃ kevalaṃ mokṣakāṅkṣayā /
cintayet paramātmānamṛtulakṣaṃ japenmanum //
(Nāradapu. Pūrva. III. 73/106-108)

Prayer

On the banks of river Saryu, under the shade of the 'Mandaar' tree [Kalpa tree—*Nyctanthes arvor tristis*], is a magnificent dais or pavilion. On it is spread a seating mat made of lotus flowers, and the dark-complexioned Sri Ram is seated on it. His right hand is held in a 'Gyan Mudra' [with palms open, the thumb and first finger touching each other and the rest of the fingers pointing upwards, the hand folded in from the elbow joint and held closely against the chest; this is a blessing posture; the body is erect, and the legs are in a meditative posture called Pamasan wherein they are folded inwards (bent at the knees) and placed one over the other so that the person sits with the sole of the feet lying on the lap of the opposite side]. To his left is Sita, and Laxman is to his right. Sri Ram's stupendous radiance and majestic beauty is superior to that of Kamdeo-cupid. He is meditating upon and experiencing the bliss attained by self-realisation of the peerless, matchless and pristine pure, crystal-like consciousness called the Atma (soul). One should invoke, focus upon and remember Sri Ram with sincere desire for liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation, and do Japa (repeating, chanting) of his holy Mantra (Narad Puran, Purvardh, 73/106-108).

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ARANYA KAND

Aranya Kand — Canto 1

Slaying of Viradh

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

अथ तत्र दिनं स्थित्वा प्रभाते रघुनन्दनः। स्नात्वा मुनिं समामन्त्र्य प्रयाणायोपचक्रमे।। 1।।
मुने गच्छमहे सर्वे मुनिमण्डलमण्डितम्। विपिनं दण्डकं यत्र त्वमाज्ञातुमिहार्हसि।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

atha tatra dinaṃ sthitvā prabhāte raghunandanaḥ /
snātvā muniṃ samāmantrya prayāṇāyopacakrame //
mune gacchāmahe sarve munimaṇḍalamaṇḍitam /
vipinaṃ daṇḍakaṃ yatra tvamājñātumihārhasi //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Sri Ram stayed at the hermitage of sage Atri that day, and the next morning he bathed and prepared to leave (1). He said, 'Oh sage! We wish to go to the Dandakaranya forest which is adorned by (i.e. inhabited by) different groups or clusters of hermits, sages, ascetics etc. So, please give us your permission (2).

मार्गप्रदर्शनार्थाय शिष्यानाज्ञप्तुमर्हसि। श्रुत्वा रामस्य वचनं प्रहस्यात्रिर्महायशाः।
प्राह तत्र रघुश्रेष्ठं राम राम सुराश्रय।। 3।।
सर्वस्य मार्गद्रष्टा त्वं तव को मार्गदर्शकः। तथापि दर्शयिष्यन्ति तव लोकानुसारिणः।।4।।

mārgapradarśanārthāya śiṣyānājñaptumarhasi /
śrutvā rāmasya vacanaṃ prahasyātrirmahāyaśāḥ /
prāha tatra raghuśreṣṭhaṃ rāma rāma surāśraya //
sarvasya mārgadraṣṭā tvaṃ tava ko mārgadarśakaḥ /
tathāpi darśayiṣyanti tava lokānusāriṇaḥ //

Give instructions to some of your disciples to show us the path'. Hearing these words of Sri Ram, the most famous and renowned sage Atri smiled and replied, 'Oh Sri Ram! Oh the best in the whole clan of king Raghu who gives shelter and refuge to even the Gods! You show the path to others (because you are the all-knowing and omniscient

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Lord; you show the correct, righteous and auspicious path to all the creatures of this creation), then say who can (or is competent enough to) show you the path? Nevertheless, since at present you are following the normal behaviour of an ordinary human, my disciples will surely go to show you the way' (3-4).

इति शिष्यान्समादिश्य स्वयं किञ्चित्तमन्वगात्। रामेण वारितः प्रीत्या अत्रिः स्वभवनं ययौ।।5।।
क्रोशमात्रं ततो गत्वा ददर्श महतीं नदीम्। अत्रेः शिष्यानुवाचेदं रामो राजीवलोचनः।।6।।

iti śiṣyānsamādiśya svayaṃ kiñcittamanvagāt /
rāmeṇa vāritaḥ prītyā atriḥ svabhavanaṃ yayau //
krośamātraṃ tato gatvā dadarśa mahatīṃ nadīṃ /
atreḥ śiṣyānuvācedaṃ rāmo rājīvalocanaḥ //

Then, having ordered his disciples accordingly, sage Atri himself went for some distance to see off Sri Ram, and when the latter requested him most affectionately and positely not to proceed any further, he returned back to his hermitage (5). After having gone a distance of one Kosh (appx. 2 miles), Sri Ram saw a very large river. Then the lotus-eyed Sri Ram asked the disciples (sent by Atri) (6)—

[Note :—The presence of disciples at Atri's Ashram shows that it was more of a seminary than just a simple hermitage for doing penances and austerities, because students used to stay there for education. In comparison, sage Sarbhang and Sutikshan had no disciple-students staying in their hermitages. On the other hand, some were monasteries as well, such as Valmiki's, where other adult sages and seers used to stay. Some were simply pure hermitages, such as Sarbhang's.]

नद्याः सन्तरणे कश्चिदुपायो विद्यते न वा। ऊचुस्ते विद्यते नौका सुदृढा रघुनन्दन।।7।।
तारयिष्यामहे युष्मान्वयमेव क्षणादिह। ततो नावि समारोप्य सीतां राघवलक्ष्मणौ।।8।।
क्षणात्सन्तारयामासुर्नदीं मुनिकुमारकाः। रामाभिनन्दिताः सर्वे जग्मुरत्रेरथाश्रमम्।।9।।

nadyāḥ santaraṇe kaścidupāyo vidyate na vā /
ūcuste vidyate naukā sudṛḍhā raghunandana //
tārayiṣyāmahe yuṣmānvayameva kṣaṇādiha /
tato nāvi samāropya sītāṃ rāghavalakṣmaṇau //
kṣaṇātsantārayāmāsurnadīṃ munikumārakāḥ /
rāmābhinanditāḥ sarve jagmuratrerathāśramam //

'Oh Brahmacharis (students of a sage obtaining scriptural education and observing celibacy and self restraint during the period)!

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Is there any way to cross the river or not?' The disciples replied, 'Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! There is a strong boat (a sort of canoe) here (7). We shall put you into it and take you across the river in a short while'. Then the hermit-sons boarded Sri Ram and Laxman along with Sita on the boat (8) and took them soon to the other side of the river. Then, after being praised and honoured by Sri Ram, they returned to the hermitage of (their Guru) sage Atri (9).

तावेत्य विपिनं घोरं झिल्लीझङ्कारनादितम्। नानामृगगणाकीर्णं सिंहव्याघ्रादिभीषणम्।। 10।।
राक्षसैर्घोररूपैश्च सेवितं रोमहर्षणम्। प्रविश्य विपिनं घोरं रामो लक्ष्मणमब्रवीत्।। 11।।

tāvetya vipinaṃ ghoraṃ jhillījhaṅkāranāditam /
nānāmṛgaganākīrṇaṃ siṁhavyāghrādibhīṣaṇam //
rākṣasairghorarūpaiśca sevitaṃ romaharṣaṇam /
praviśya vipinaṃ ghoraṃ rāmo lakṣmaṇamabravīt //

Then they (Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita) reached a very dense and wild forest echoing with the clamour of chirping, buzzing, rattling, humming, jingling and strumming insects of all kinds, such as cricket etc., and was full of different types of wild, ferocious and cruel animals, such as lions, tigers etc. (10). It was infested with horrible demons who assumed numerous strange and terrible shapes and forms. Entering that wild, dense, fearsome, awful and thrilling forest, Sri Ram said to Laxman (11)—

इतः परं प्रयत्नेन गन्तव्यं सहितेन मे। धनुर्गुणेन संयोज्य शरानपि करे दधत्।। 12।।
अग्रे यास्याम्यहं पश्चात्त्वमन्वेहि धनुर्धरः। आवयोर्मध्यगा सीता मायेवात्मपरात्मनोः।। 13।।

itaḥ paraṃ prayatnena gantavyaṃ sahitena me /
dhanurguṇena saṁyojya śarānapi kare dadhat //
agre yāsyāmyahaṃ paścāttvamanvehi dhanurdharaḥ /
āvayormadhyagā sītā māyevātmaparātmanoḥ //

'From here onwards, we must walk with great vigilance and care, and keep ourselves fully alert. I will string my bow and keep an arrow ready in hand and walk in the front, while you must walk similarly in the rear. Sita must walk in between the two of us just as 'Maya' stays between the supreme Lord and the creature (12-13).

चक्षुश्चारय सर्वत्र दृष्टं रक्षोभयं महत्। विद्यते दण्डकारण्ये श्रुतपूर्वमरिन्दम।। 14।।
इत्येवं भाषमाणौ तौ जग्मतुः सार्धयोजनम्। तत्रैका पुष्करिण्यास्ते कह्लारकुमुदोत्पलैः।। 15।।

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cakṣuścāraya sarvatra dṛṣṭaṃ rakṣobhayaṃ mahat /
vidyate daṇḍakāraṇye śrutapūrvamarindama //
ityevaṃ bhāṣamāṇau tau jagmatuḥ sārdhayojanam /
tatraikā puṣkariṇyāste kahlārakumudotpalaiḥ //

Oh the vanquisher (conqueror/crusher) of opponents/enemies! Keep a watchful eye in every direction. As we have heard earlier, there appears a great fear from demons in this forest' (14). In this way, talking cheerfully with each other, they went ahead carefree for a distance of about one Yojans (i.e. 6 Kosha = 12 miles). There was a small lake there adorned by lilies, lotuses and water hyacinths (15).

अम्बुजैः शीतलोदेन शोभमाना व्यदृश्यत। तत्समीपमथो गत्वा पीत्वा तत्सलिलं शुभम्।। 16।।
ऊषुस्ते सलिलाभ्याशे क्षणं छायामुपाश्रिताः। ततो ददृशुरायान्तं महासत्त्वं भयानकम्।। 17।।

ambujaiḥ śītalodena śobhamānā vyadṛśyata /
tatsamīpamatho gatvā pītvā tatsalilaṃ śubham //
ūṣuste salilābhyāśe kṣaṇaṃ chāyāmupāśritāḥ /
tato dadṛśurāyāntaṃ mahāsattvaṃ bhayānakam //

The lake appeared very enchanting, being surrounded by a dense growth of lotus plants and having cool water. They went near it and drank its cool, comforting water (16) and sat down to rest in shade of a tree near its bank. At that moment, they saw a huge, most dreadful, formidable, strong and fierce demon, who was an ogre, approaching them (17).

करालदंष्ट्रवदनं भीषयन्तं स्वगर्जितैः। वामांसे न्यस्तशूलाग्रग्रथितानेकमानुषम्।। 18।।
भक्षयन्तं गजव्याघ्रमहिषं वनगोचरम्। ज्यारोपितं धनुर्धृत्वा रामो लक्ष्मणमब्रवीत्।। 19।।
पश्य भ्रातर्महाकायो राक्षसोऽयमुपागतः। आयात्यभिमुखं नोऽग्रे भीरूणां भयमावहन्।। 20।।

karāladaṁṣṭravadanaṃ bhīṣayantaṃ svagarjitaiḥ /
vāmāṁse nyastaśūlāgragrathitānekamānuṣam //
bhakṣayantaṃ gajavyāghramahiṣaṃ vanagocaram /
jyāropitaṃ dhanurdhṛtvā rāmo lakṣmaṇamabravīt //
paśya bhrātarmahākāyo rākṣaso'yamupāgataḥ /
āyātyabhimukhaṃ no'gre bhīrūṇāṃ bhayamāvahan //

His mouth was full of large, sharp teeth and had strong jaws. He created great fear by his dreadful roar, and had a huge trident resting on his left shoulder with many humans pierced and stuck (impaled) on it (18). He was proceeding forward menacingly, all the while

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munching and eating many wild elephants, lions and wild buffaloes that came in his way. (Note :-One can well imagine his huge, bulky size, unrelenting recklessness and ferocity!) Seeing him, Sri Ram readied his bow and told Laxman (19), 'Oh brother! Look, in front of us is this wild, ferocious, rogue mammoth-like colossus demon that creates fear and horror in the heart of timid people (20).

सज्जीकृतधनुस्तिष्ठ मा भैर्जनकनन्दिनि। इत्युक्त्वा बाणमादाय स्थितो राम इवाचलः।। 21।।
स तु दृष्ट्वा रमानाथं लक्ष्मणं जानकीं तदा। अट्टहासं ततः कृत्वा भीषयन्निदमब्रवीत्।। 22।।

sajjīkṛtadhanustiṣṭha mā bhairjanakanandini /
ityuktvā bāṇamādāya sthito rāma ivācalaḥ //
sa tu dṛṣṭvā ramānāthaṃ lakṣmaṇaṃ jānakīṃ tadā /
aṭṭahāsaṃ tataḥ kṛtvā bhīṣayannidamabravīt //

You should put your arrow on the bow and become alert. Janki (Sita)! Don't be afraid'. Saying this, Sri Ram mounted his arrow on the bow and stood motionless like a mountain (21). Soon, that colossus demon saw Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita, laughed aloud derisively, creating fear in all by his thunderous and chilling voice, he said (22)—

कौ युवां बाणतूणीरजटावल्कलधारिणौ। मुनिवेषधरौ बालौ स्त्रीसहायौ सुदुर्मदौ।। 23।।
सुन्दरौ बत मे वक्त्रप्रविष्टकवलोपमौ। किमर्थमागतौ घोरं वनं व्यालनिषेवितम्।। 24।।

kau yuvāṃ bāṇatūṇīrajaṭāvalkaladhāriṇau /
muniveṣadharau bālau strīsahāyau sudurmadau //
sundarau bata me vaktrapraviṣṭakavalopamau /
kimarthamāgatau ghoraṃ vanaṃ vyālaniṣevitam //

'Oh youthful children! Attired in clothes made of birch, having matted lock of hairs, and holding bows and arrows—who are you in the form of a hermit? You have a woman with you, and you appear to be very arrogant, proud and haughty (23). You look very beautiful (attractive, handsome, charming) and are like the morsel of food in my mouth. Alas! Why have you come in this forest infested by cruel (flesh-eating, ferocious) wild animals' (24).

श्रुत्वा रक्षोवचो रामः स्मयमान उवाच तम्। अहं रामस्त्वयं भ्राता लक्ष्मणो मम सम्मतः।। 25।।
एषा सीता मम प्राणवल्लभा वयमागतः। पितृवाक्यं पुरस्कृत्य शिक्षणार्थं भवादृशाम्।। 26।।

śrutvā rakṣovaco rāmaḥ smayamāna uvāca tam/
ahaṃ rāmastvayaṃ bhrātā lakṣmaṇo mama sammataḥ //

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eṣā sītā mama prāṇavallabhā vayamāgatāḥ /
pitṛvākyaṃ puraskṛtya śikṣaṇārthaṃ bhavādṛśām //

Hearing these words of the demon, Sri Ram replied to him smilingly (without any sign of fear or worry), 'My name is Ram and he is my dear younger brother Laxman (25). This lady is my dear wife Sita. On the orders of our father, we have come to the forest to teach a lesson to those who are like you (or of your ilk)' (26).

श्रुत्वा तद्रामवचनमट्टहासमथाकरोत्। व्यादाय वक्त्रं बाहुभ्यां शूलमादाय सत्वरः।। 27।।
मां न जानासि राम त्वं विराधं लोकविश्रुतम्। मद्भयान्मुनयः सर्वे त्यक्त्वा वनमितो गताः।।28।।
यदि जीवितुमिच्छास्ति त्यक्त्वा सीतां निरायुधौ। पलायतं न चेच्छीघ्रं भक्षयामि युवामहम्।।29।।

śṛtvā tadrāmavacanamaṭṭahāsamathākarot /
vyādāya vaktraṃ bāhubhyāṃ śūlamādāya satvaraḥ //
māṃ na jānāsi rāma tvaṃ virādhaṃ lokaviśrutam /
madbhayānmunayaḥ sarve tyaktvā vanamito gatāḥ //
yadi jīvitumicchāsti tyaktvā sītāṃ nirāyudhau /
palāyataṃ na cecchīghraṃ bhakṣayāmi yuvāmaham //

Hearing these fearless words of Sri Ram, he laughed thunderously and heartily. Opening his mouth wide, he lifted his trident in his hands (27). He said, 'Oh Sri Ram! Don't you know me? I am the world famous (demon) Viradh. It is due to my fear that all the resident hermits and sages have fled and abandoned this forest and have gone away to some other places (28). If you wish to live, then leave Sita here and run away without your arms (bows, arrows, swords etc.). Otherwise, I shall immediately eat you two' (29).

इत्युक्त्वा राक्षसः सीतामादातुमभिदुद्रुवे। रामश्चिच्छेद तद्बाहू शरेण प्रहसन्निव।। 30।।
ततः क्रोधपरीतात्मा व्यादाय विकटं मुखम्। राममभ्यद्रवद्रामश्चिच्छेद परिधावतः।। 31।।
पदद्वयं विराधस्य तदद्भुतमिवाभवत्।। 32।।

ityuktvā rākṣasaḥ sītāmādātumabhidudruve /
rāmaścicchedа tadbāhū śareṇa prahasanniva //
tataḥ krodhaparītātmā vyādāya vikaṭaṃ mukham /
rāmamabhyadravadrāmaścicchedа paridhāvataḥ //
padadvayaṃ virādhasya tadadbhutamivābhavat //

Saying this, that demon lunged forward to catch hold of Sita. Sri Ram laughed contemptuously and dismembered (cut-off; severed) his

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arms (30). At this, being overcome with a terrible anger, the demon opened his fierce and horrible mouth wide and rushed towards Sri Ram (to gobble him up). Then Sri Ram severed the two legs of Viradh who was rushing forward in his direction. This was a very strange, mysterious and fantastic happening, never witnessed before (31-32).

ततः सर्प इवास्येन ग्रसितुं राममापतत्। ततोऽर्धचन्द्राकारेण बाणेनास्य महच्छिरः।। 33।।
चिच्छेद रुधिरौघेण पपात धरणीतले। ततः सीता समालिङ्ग्य प्रशशंस रघूत्तमम्।। 34।।

tataḥ sarpa ivāsyena grasituṃ rāmamāpatat /
tato'rdhacandrākāreṇa bāṇenāsya mahacchiraḥ //
ciccheda rudhiraugheṇa papāta dharaṇītale /
tataḥ sītā samāliṅgya praśaśaṁsa raghūttamam //

Thence the demon crawled forward to swallow Sri Ram in his mouth like a large snake (swallows a toad). At this, Sri Ram sliced-off his head with an arrow shaped like a crescent moon (33). The demon became drenched in blood and immediately fell on the ground. Seeing him dead in this manner, Sita embraced the most exalted son of Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) and showered immense praises on him (34).

ततो दुन्दुभयो नेदुर्दिवि देवगणेरिताः। ननृतुश्चाप्सरा हृष्टा जगुर्गन्धर्वकिन्नराः।। 35।।
विराधकायादतिसुन्दराकृतिर्विभ्राजमानो विमलाम्बरावृतः।
प्रतप्तचामीकरचारुभूषणो व्यदृश्यताग्रे गगने रविर्यथा।। 36।।

tato dundubhayo nedurdivi devagaṇeritāḥ /
nanṛtuścāpsarā hṛṣṭā jagurgandharvakinnarāḥ //
virādhakāyādatisundarākṛtirvibhrājamāno vimalāmbarāvṛtaḥ /
prataptacāmīkaracārubhūṣaṇo vyadṛśyatāgre gagane raviryathā //

The Gods sounded their trumpets in the sky (to celebrate the slaying of Viradh), the Apsaras (celestial female dancers) began dancing in merriment, while the Gandharvas (celestial musicians) and Kinnars (celestial male dancers and singers) began singing adulatory and felicitous songs in honour of Sri Ram (35). Presently, a very handsome male emerged from the dead body of Viradh; he was as splendorous as mid-day sun in the sky, and was adorned by beautiful clothes and ornaments made of molten (i.e. purified, shining) gold (36).

प्रणम्य रामं प्रणतार्तिहारिणं भवप्रवाहोपरमं घृणाकरम्।
प्रणम्य भूयः प्रणनाम दण्डवत् प्रपन्नसर्वार्तिहरं प्रसन्नधीः।। 37।।

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praṇamya rāmaṃ praṇatārtihāriṇaṃ
bhavapravāhoparamaṃ ghṛṇākaram /
praṇamya bhūyaḥ praṇanāma daṇḍavat
prapannasarvārtiharaṃ prasannadhīḥ //

That gentleman cheerfully bowed before Sri Ram who removes the worries, sorrows, tribulations and troubles of those who have taken his refuge and shelter, who helps one to cross over the ocean-like measureless, fathomless, mundane and entrapping world, who is merciful and compassionate, and who is of a very cheerful, pleasant and charming disposition. He once again prostrated himself on the earth like a stick before the Lord to pay his deepest of reverence and obeisance (37).

विराध उवाच

श्रीराम राजीवदलायताक्ष विद्याधरोऽहं विमलप्रकाशः।
दुर्वाससाकारणकोपमूर्तिना शप्तः पुरा सोऽद्य विमोचितस्त्वया।।38।।
इतः परं त्वच्चरणारविन्दयोः स्मृतिः सदा मेऽस्तु भवोपशान्तये।
त्वन्नामसङ्कीर्तनमेव वाणी करोतु मे कर्णपुटं त्वदीयम्।।39।।
कथामृतं पातु करद्वयं ते पादारविन्दार्चनमेव कुर्यात्।
शिरश्च ते पादयुगप्रणामं करोतु नित्यं भवदीयमेवम्।।40।।

virādha uvāca

śrīrāma rājīvadalāyatākṣa vidyādharo'haṃ vimalaprakāśaḥ /
durvāsasākāraṇakopamūrtinā śaptaḥ purā so'dya vimocitastvayā //
itaḥ paraṃ tvaccaraṇāravindayoḥ smṛtiḥ sadā me'stu bhavopaśāntaye /
tvannāmasaṅkīrtanameva vāṇī karotu me karṇapuṭaṃ tvadīyam //
kathāmṛtaṃ pātu karadvayaṃ te pādāravindārcanameva kuryāt /
śiraśca te pādayugapraṇāmaṃ karotu nityaṃ bhavadīyamevam //

Viradh said, 'Oh the lotus-petal eyed Sri Ram! I am Vidyadhar, the pure and radiant one. In an earlier time, sage Durvasa, who used to get angry and wrathful even without a cause (i.e. without any rhyme or reason, at the slightest provocation or pretext), had cursed me. You have liberated me from that curse today (38). Now, have grace upon me so that in future I shall always be able to have remembrance, fervour, dedication and ardent devotion in your holy feet which removes the shackles of this (deluding, entrapping, transient, false, mortal and mundane) world. Let my voice and speech always chant

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or speak your holy name; let my ears always hear your glorious and divine stories; let my hands always worship and serve your lotus-like feet; and let my head keep on bowing before your holy feet (39-40).

[Note :—'Vidyadhar' is a class of semi God which is attained by wise, learned souls who could not achieve complete salvation.]

नमस्तुभ्यं भगवते विशुद्धज्ञानमूर्तये। आत्मारामाय रामाय सीतारामाय वेधसे।। 41।।
प्रपन्नं पाहि मां राम यास्यामि त्वदनुज्ञया। देवलोकं रघुश्रेष्ठ माया मां मावृणोतु ते।।42।।

namastubhyaṃ bhagavate viśuddhajñānamūrtaye /
ātmārāmāya rāmāya sītārāmāya vedhase //
prapannaṃ pāhi māṃ rāma yāsyāmi tvadanujñayā /
devalokaṃ raghuśreṣṭha māyā māṃ māvṛṇotu te //

Oh Lord, you are an embodiment of pristine pure Gyan (enlightenment, true knowledge, wisdom and realisation of the essential truth and reality in creation)! I bow reverentially before you. You are known as 'Ram' because you remain established in your natural, inherent, sublime, divine, ethereal, transcendental and truthful form (i.e. you are aware of the nature of your 'true self' as being the supreme Lord who is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, all-pervading, all-encompassing and encompassed by all, all-knowing, attributeless, formless, nameless, the micro as well the macro forms of the soul, almighty, eternal, infinite, the cause and the end of all that exists, the ultimate reality, and the one who is beyond and without any definitions). You are called 'Sita-Ram' too (because you appear along with your Maya in the form of Sita who is your companion in your endeavour to create, sustain and conclude this creation; it is your cosmic energy and infinite power that enables you to implement your decisions and make them effective—namely, as a divine couple Ram and Sita). You are the creator of the world. I bow reverentially before you (41). Oh Sri Ram! I am in your refuge; you should protect and save me. Oh the best in the clan of Raghu! By your permission, I am going to the abode of Gods; please bless me so that your delusion creating powers called Maya do not cover (i.e. envelope, or have influence over) me' (42).

[Note :—Verse no. 41 tells us the difference between the words 'Ram' and 'Sita-Ram'. The former relates more to Vedantic concepts and philosophy of the immaculate Soul which is pure and non-dual, while the latter tilts more towards the Bhakti aspect of the Purans wherein the Lord has taken birth to fulfill certain aspirations of his devotees and to

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aid them in attaining liberation and deliverance from the world by remembering the Lord's life on this earth and singing his glories. In other words, the former concept of 'Ram' appeals more to learned and wise souls who are well steeped in the philosophy of the Upanishads, while the latter version appeals to the devotees who are not that fortunate to have studied the Vedas and the Upanishads but nevertheless are eager to attain emancipation and salvation by an easy method. This verse can be called the 'Gospel of Viradh'.]

इति विज्ञापितस्तेन प्रसन्नो रघुनन्दनः। ददौ वरं तदा प्रीतो विराधाय महामतिः।।43।।
गच्छ विद्याधराशेषमायादोषगुणा जिताः। त्वया मद्दर्शनात्सद्यो मुक्तो ज्ञानवतां वरः।।44।।

iti vijñāpitastena prasanno raghunandanaḥ/
dadau varaṃ tadā prīto virādhāya mahāmatiḥ//
gaccha vidyādharāśeṣamāyādoṣaguṇā jitāḥ/
tvayā maddarśanātsadyo mukto jñānavatāṃ varaḥ//

When Viradh had prayed as above, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) was very pleased with him, and he bestowed him with this boon (43), 'Oh Vidyadhar! You should go now! You have conquered and overcome all the virtues and evils of Maya (i.e. you have realised the truth, and therefore it is obvious that the delusions created or generated by Maya have been vanquished by you). You are the most exalted among the wise and enlightened ones, and because of the effects of my Darshan (divine, august and holy sight), you are immediately emancipated and salvaged (44).

मद्भक्तिर्दुर्लभा लोके जाता चेन्मुक्तिदा यतः। अतस्त्वं भक्तिसम्पन्नः परं याहि ममाज्ञया।।45।।
रामेण रक्षोनिधनं सुघोरं शापाद्विमुक्तिर्वरदानमेवम्।
विद्याधरत्वं पुनरेव लब्धं रामं गृणन्नेति नरोऽखिलार्थान्।।46।।

madbhaktidurlabhā loke jātā cenmuktidā yataḥ/
atastvaṃ bhaktisampannaḥ paraṃ yāhi mamājñayā//
rāmeṇa rakṣonidhanaṃ sughoraṃ śāpādvimuktirvaradānamevam/
vidyādharatvaṃ punareva labdhaṃ rāmaṃ gṛṇanneti naro'khilārthān//

In this world, my Bhakti (devotion and dedication) is very difficult (or rare). If it arises at all in the heart, it is sure to give emancipation and salvation to the creature. You are endowed with my sincere devotion, so you should go to my supreme abode on my orders' (45). In this manner, Sri Ram slayed a very ferocious and formidable demon, liberated him from his curse, blessed him and restored him to his

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former wise self as Vidyadhar. A person who dedicatedly worships, honours, reveres and adores Sri Ram by singing the glorious deeds which he had done (as an incarnation), is sure to receive all the desired fruits of his wishes as a reward in this world (46).

***

Aranya Kand — Canto 2

Sri Ram meets sages Sharbhang, Sutikshan etc.

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

विराधे स्वर्गते रामो लक्ष्मणेन च सीतया। जगाम शरभङ्गस्य वनं सर्वसुखावहम्।।1।।
शरभङ्गस्ततो दृष्ट्वा रामं सौमित्रिणा सह। आयान्तं सीतया सार्धं सम्भ्रमादुत्थितः सुधीः।।2।।
अभिगम्य सुसम्पूज्य विष्टरेषूपवेशयत्। आतिथ्यमकरोत्तेषां कन्दमूलफलादिभिः।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

virādhe svargate rāmo lakṣmaṇena ca sītayā /
jagāma śarabhaṅgasya vanaṃ sarvasukhāvaham //
śarabhaṅgastato dṛṣṭvā rāmaṃ saumitriṇā saha /
āyāntaṃ sītayā sārdhaṃ sambhramādutthitaḥ sudhīḥ //
abhigamya susampūjya viṣṭareṣūpaveśayat /
ātithyamakarotteṣāṃ kandamūlaphalādibhiḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! After Viradh had gone to the heavens, Sri Ram and Laxman along with Sita went to the all comfort-providing and pleasant forest of sage Sharbhang (1). The wise sage stood up immediately when he saw Sri Ram come towards him with Sita and Laxman (2). He went forward to receive them, duly worshipped and adored them, and seated them honourably on a mat. Then he offered his guests fruits, edible roots and stems as refreshment (as a token of warm welcome) (3).

प्रीत्याह शरभङ्गोऽपि रामं भक्तपरायणम्। बहुकालमिहैवासं तपसे कृतनिश्चयः।।4।।
तव सन्दर्शनाकाङ्क्षी राम त्वं परमेश्वरः। अद्य मत्तपसा सिद्धं यत्पुण्यं बहु विद्यते।
तत्सर्वं तव दास्यामि ततो मुक्तिं व्रजाम्यहम्।।5।।

prītyāha śarabhaṅgo'pi rāmaṃ bhaktiparāyaṇam /
bahukālamihaivāsaṃ tapase kṛtaniścayaḥ //

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tava sandarśanākāṅkṣī rāma tvaṃ parameśvaraḥ /
adya mattapasā siddhaṃ yatpuṇyaṃ bahu vidyate /
tatsarvaṃ tava dāsyāmi tato muktiṃ vrajāmyahaṃ //

After that, sage Sharbhang affectionately asked the Lord who is most gracious and munificent towards his devotees, 'I have been living here for a long time doing determined austerities and penances (4) with a desire to have your holy Darshan (divine, august and holy sight). Oh Sri Ram! You are the personification of the supreme Lord himself. All the 'Punya' (accumulated good effect of noble, virtuous and righteous deeds) that I have gathered till now by doing Tapa, I shall offer all of it to you today, and in return I shall get the exalted state of emancipation and salvation' (5).

समर्प्य रामस्य महत्सुपुण्यफलं विरक्तः शरभङ्गयोगी।
चितिं समारोहयदप्रमेयं रामं ससीतं सहसा प्रणम्य।।6।।

samarpya rāmasya mahatsupuṇyaphalaṃ viraktaḥ śarabhaṅgayogī /
citiṃ samārohayadaprameyaṃ rāmaṃ sasītaṃ sahasā praṇamya //

Saying this, sage Sharbhang, who was a great renunciate and a most exalted ascetic, offered all the immense fruits derived from his doing Punya (i.e. his righteousness, noble deeds, spiritual pursuits, austerities, penances, devotion and worship etc.) to Sri Ram. He then bowed in reverence to the Lord who is without an end, is measureless, limitless and infinite, together with Sita. Then the sage strode the funeral pile effortlessly (i.e. without any compunctions, any second thoughts, fear, hesitation, regrets, or dithering; or he did it most willingly, gladly, cheerfully and as a matter of great privilege and honour) (6).

ध्यायंश्चिरं राममशेषहृत्स्थं दूर्वादलश्यामलमम्बुजाक्षम्।
चीराम्बरं स्निग्धजटाकलापं सीतासहायं सहलक्ष्मणं तम्।।7।।

dhyāyaṁściraṃ rāmamaśeṣahṛtsthaṃ dūrvādalaśyāmalamambujākṣam /
cīrāmbaraṃ snigdhajaṭākalāpaṃ sītāsahāyaṃ sahalakṣmaṇaṃ tam //

While on the pyre, he meditated in his heart for a long time on the divine forms of Laxman and Sita along with Sri Ram who is all-pervading, omnipresent, all-knowing and omniscient, who is dark-complexioned like the 'Durba' grass, who is lotus-eyed, and who wears a Pitambar (the silk cloth worn by Vishnu) and has a smooth (well oiled) lock of matted hairs on his head (7).

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को वा दयालुः स्मृतकामधेनुरन्यो जगत्यां रघुनायकादहो।
स्मृतो मया नित्यमनन्यभाजा ज्ञात्वा स्मृतिं मे स्वयमेव यातः।। 8।।

ko vā dayāluḥ smṛtakāmadhenuranyo jagatyāṃ raghunāyakādaho /
smṛto mayā nityamananyabhājā jñātvā smṛtiṃ me svayameva yātaḥ //

The sage said to himself, 'Ah! In this world, who else except Raghunayak (Sri Ram, the chief in the clan of king Raghu) is more merciful, compassionate, munificent, magnanimous, gracious and kind that he fulfils all the desires of his devotees by their simply (or merely) remembering him? I had been constantly and dedicatedly devoted towards him and had been remembering him daily for a long time. So he has been so merciful, gracious and kind that he has come here himself to meet me (8).

पश्यत्विदानीं देवेशो रामो दाशरथिः प्रभुः। दग्ध्वा स्वदेहं गच्छामि ब्रह्मलोकमकल्मषः।। 9।।
अयोध्याधिपतिर्मेऽस्तु हृदये राघवः सदा। यद्वामाङ्के स्थिता सीता मेघस्येव तडिल्लता।। 10।।

paśyatvidānīṃ deveśo rāmo dāśarathiḥ prabhuḥ /
dagdhvā svadehaṃ gacchāmi brahmalokamakalmaṣaḥ //
ayodhyādhipatirme'stu hṛdaye rāghavaḥ sadā /
yadvāmāṅke sthitā sītā meghasyeva taḍillatā //

Let Lord Ram, the son of Dashrath and the Lord of Gods, constantly watch me with affection while I shall be burning my mortal body, become sinless, and then go to the abode of Brahm (9). Let Raghav (Sri Ram), the Lord of Ayodhya, who has Sita inseparably on his left as lightening is established in a cloud, always reside permanently in my heart' (10).

इति रामं चिरं ध्यात्वा दृष्ट्वा च पुरतः स्थितम्।
प्रज्वाल्य सहसा वह्निं दग्ध्वा पञ्चात्मकं वपुः।। 11।।
दिव्यदेहधरः साक्षाद्ययौ लोकपतेः पदम्। ततो मुनिगणाः सर्वे दण्डकारण्यवासिनः।
आजग्मू राघवं द्रष्टुं शरभङ्गनिवेशनम्।। 12।।

iti rāmaṃ ciraṃ dhyātvā dṛṣṭvā ca purataḥ sthitam /
prajvālya sahasā vahniṃ dagdhvā pañcātmakaṃ vapuḥ //
divyadehadharaḥ sākṣādyayau lokapateḥ padam /
tato munigaṇāḥ sarve daṇḍakāraṇyavāsinaḥ /
ājagmū rāghavaṃ draṣṭuṃ śarabhaṅganiveśanam //

In this way, meditating upon (the formless, attributeless,

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macrocosmic, divine and sublime form of) Sri Ram and seeing his (formed, with attributes, microcosmic, holy and divine) form present in front of him for a long time, sage Sharbhang lit the fire and burnt his mortal body made up of five elements (earth, water, fire, air and sky) (11).

He assumed a divine form and went to Brahmaloka (the abode of Lord Brahm; the heaven). After that, all the resident sages, hermits etc. of Dandakaranya came to sage Sharbhang's hermitage to have a divine, holy and august view (Darshan) of Sri Ram (12).

दृष्ट्वा मुनिसमूहं तं जानकीरामलक्ष्मणाः। प्रणेमुः सहसा भूमौ मायामानुषरूपिणः।। 13।।
आशीर्भिरभिनन्द्याथ रामं सर्वहृदि स्थितम्। ऊचुः प्राञ्जलयः सर्वे धनुर्बाणाधरं हरिम्।।14।।

dṛṣṭvā munisamūhaṃ taṃ jānakīrāmalakṣmaṇāḥ/
praṇemuḥ sahasā bhūmau māyāmānuṣarūpiṇaḥ//
āśīrbhirabhinandyātha rāmaṃ sarvahṛdi sthitam/
ūcuḥ prāñjalayaḥ sarve dhanurbāṇadharaṃ harim//

Seeing that congregation of sages and hermits, Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita who were in illusionary images (i.e. in the disguise) of human beings, bowed before them by putting their heads on the ground (13). Those sages/hermits honoured and praised the omnipresent, all-pervading Lord Ram who resides in the heart of all by blessing him, and then they said to the bow-and-arrow bearing Sri Hari (Vishnu in the form of Lord Ram) with palms joined together in submission (14)—

[Note :—The use of the words Hari clearly shows that the sages and hermits knew who Sri Ram actually was. He was an incarnation of Hari or Lord Vishnu. See below also.]

भूमेर्भारावताराय जातोऽसि ब्रह्मणार्थितः। जानीमस्त्वां हरिं लक्ष्मीं जानकीं लक्ष्मणं तथा।। 15।।
शेषांशं शङ्खचक्रे द्वे भरतं सानुजं तथा। अतश्चादौ ऋषीणां त्वं दुःखं मोक्तुमिहार्हसि।। 16।।
आगच्छ यामो मुनिसेवितानि वनानि सर्वाणि रघूत्तम क्रमात्।
द्रष्टुं सुमित्रासुतजानकीभ्यां तदा दयाऽस्मासु दृढा भविष्यति।।17।।

bhūmerbhārāvatārāya jāto'si brahmaṇārthitaḥ/
jānīmastvāṃ hariṃ lakṣmīṃ jānakīṃ lakṣmaṇaṃ tathā//
śeṣāṁśaṃ śaṅkhacakre dve bharataṃ sānujaṃ tathā/
ataścādau ṛṣīṇāṃ tvaṃ duḥkhaṃ moktumihārhasi//
āgacha yāmo munisevitāni vanāni sarvāṇi raghūttama kramāt/
draṣṭuṃ sumitrāsutajānakībhyāṃ tadā dayā'smāsu dṛḍhā bhaviṣyati//

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'On the prayers of Brahma (the creator), you have manifested yourself to remove the burden of the earth (from demonic, evil forces). We know that you are Sri Hari (Vishnu) himself, Sita is goddess Laxmi, Laxman is the legendary Sheshnath in right earnest, while Bharat and Shatrughan are human manifestation of the conch and discus of Lord Vishnu respectively. So, you must first remove the sorrows, distresses and agonies of the sages, hermits and seers here (15-16). Oh the best one in Raghu's clan (Sri Ram)! Come, along with Sita and Laxman, you come along with us and pay a visit to each of our hermitages individually. By doing this, you will have shown great mercy, grace and pity on us' (17).

इति विज्ञापितो रामः कृताञ्जलिपुटैर्विभुः। जगाम मुनिभिः सार्धं द्रष्टुं मुनिवनानि सः।। 18।।
ददर्श तत्र पतितान्यनेकानि शिरांसि सः। अस्थिभूतानि सर्वत्र रामो वचनमब्रवीत्।। 19।।

iti vijñāpito rāmaḥ kṛtāñjalipuṭairvibhuḥ/
jagāma munibhiḥ sārdhaṃ draṣṭuṃ munivanāni saḥ//
dadarśa tatra patitānyanekāni śarāṁsi saḥ/
asthibhūtāni sarvatra rāmo vacanamabravīt//

Being so earnestly requested by the hermits, ascetics, sages and seers who pleaded with him with palms joined together in submission, Sri Ram accompanied them to see their forests (i.e. places where their hermitages were located. Since they resided separately, their hermitages were all located some distance away from each other, though being in the same general geographical area) (18). There, Sri Ram saw many skulls and skeletons strewn in all directions. Seeing them, Sri Ram enquired about them from the accompanying sages (19)—

अस्थीनि केषामेतानि किमर्थं पतितानि वै। तमूचुर्मुनयो राम ऋषीणां मस्तकानि हि।। 20।।
राक्षसैर्भक्षितानीश प्रमत्तानां समाधितः। अन्तरायं मुनीनां ते पश्यन्तोऽनुचरन्ति हि।। 21।।

asthīni keṣāmetāni kimarthaṃ patitāni vai/
tamūcurmunayo rāma ṛṣīṇāṃ mastakāni hi//
rākṣasairbhakṣitānīśa pramattānāṃ samādhitaḥ/
antarāyaṃ munīnāṃ te paśyanto'nucaranti hi//

'To whom do these skeletons belong, and why are they lying here (in a forest inhabited by sages and hermits)?' Then the sages replied, 'Oh Sri Ram! These are the skulls of sages, seers, hermits and ascetics

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(20). Oh the able, potent, competent and powerful Lord! They have been eaten by ogres (man eating demons). These demons roam about freely seeking an opportunity to pounce upon them when they are engrossed in deep meditation, and therefore unable to escape' (21).

[Note :—This verse explains why the ogres and ferocious demons were not destroyed by the sages' curse—they attacked on the sly, surreptitiously, when the sages' attention was diverted. This resulted in constant distraction for them, and they were unable to meditate and complete their sacrifices.]

श्रुत्वा वाक्यं मुनीनां स भयदैन्यसमन्वितम्। प्रतिज्ञामकरोद्रामो वधायाशेषरक्षसाम्।। 22।।
पूज्यमानः सदा तत्र मुनिभिर्वनवासिभिः। जानक्या सहितो रामो लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः।।23।।
उवास कतिचित्तत्र वर्षाणि रघुनन्दनः। एवं क्रमेण संपश्यन्नृषीणामाश्रमान्विभुः।। 24।।

śrutvā vākyaṃ munīnāṃ sa bhayadainyasamanvitam /
pratijñāmakarodrāmo vadhāyāśeṣarakṣasām //
pūjyamānaḥ sadā tatra munibhirvanavāsibhiḥ /
jānakyā sahito rāmo lakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ //
uvāsa katicittatra varṣāṇi raghunandanaḥ /
evaṃ krameṇa saṁpaśyannṛṣīṇāmāśramānvibhuḥ //

Hearing these pitiful words full of fear from the sages, Sri Ram made a stern vow to kill all the demons (22). Sri Ram wandered around visiting the various hermitages of forest-dwelling hermits and sages. Being worshipped, adored and honoured by them, Sri Ram spent some years there along with Laxman and Sita (23-24).

सुतीक्ष्णस्याश्रमं प्रागात्प्रख्यातमृषिसङ्कुलम्। सर्वर्तुगुणसम्पन्नं सर्वकालसुखावहम्।। 25।।
राममागतमाकर्ण्य सुतीक्ष्णः स्वयमागतः। अगस्त्यशिष्यो रामस्य मन्त्रोपासनतत्परः।
विधिवत्पूजयामास भक्त्युत्कण्ठितलोचनः।।26।।

sutīkṣṇasyāśramaṃ prāgātprakhyātamṛṣisaṅkulam /
sarvartuguṇasampannaṃ sarvakālasukhāvaham //
rāmamāgatamākarṇya sutīkṣṇaḥ svayamāgataḥ /
agastyaśiṣyo rāmasya mantropāsanatatparaḥ /
vidhivatpūjayāmāsa bhaktyutkaṇṭhitalocanaḥ //

After that, they (Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita) went to the famous sage Sutikshan's hermitage which was full of many sages, seers, ascetics and hermits, had the pleasant and charming characters typical of all the seasons, and, therefore, was very comfortable at all times (25).

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Hearing of Sri Ram's arrival, sage Agastya's disciple Sutikshan, who was a worshipper of the 'Ram Mantra' (the holy name of Sri Ram as prescribed by the Vedas, and especially the Ram Uttar Taponishad, as being the salvation provider group of holy letters) went forward to receive the Lord himself, and duly worship him as per established tradition. At that time, sage Sutikshan's eyes were devotionally eager to have Darshan (divine, holy and august sight or view) of the Lord (26).

सुतीक्ष्ण उवाच

त्वन्मन्त्रजाप्यहमनन्तगुणाप्रमेय सीतापते शिवविरिञ्चिसमाश्रिताङ्घ्रे।
संसारसिन्धुतरणामलपोतपाद रामाभिराम सततं तव दासदासः।।27।।

sutīkṣṇa uvāca

tvanmantrajāpyahamanantaguṇāprameya
sītāpate śivaviriñcisamāśritāṅghre /
saṁsārasindhutaraṇāmalapotapāda
rāmābhirāma satataṃ tava dāsadāsaḥ //

Sage Sutikshan said, 'Oh Sitapati (a form of address for Sri Ram; literally meaning the husband of Sita), the one with endless virtues who is measureless, limitless and endless! It is your holy Mantra that I repeat constantly. Oh Sri Ram, the enchanting, beautiful and bewitching one! Lord Shiva and Brahma are dependent on (i.e. have taken shelter in) your holy feet which are like a strong and sturdy boat/ship to take one across the ocean-like mundane and mortal world. I am always the servant (devotee, follower, supplicant) of, and humbler than, your devotees (27).

मामद्य सर्वजगतामविगोचरस्त्वं त्वन्मायया सुतकलत्रगृहान्धकूपे।
मग्नं निरीक्ष्य मलपुद्गलपिण्डमोहपाशानुबद्धहृदयं स्वयमागतोऽसि।।28।।

māmadya sarvajagatāmavigocarastvaṃ
tvanmāyayā sutakalatragṛhāndhakūpe /
magnaṃ nirīkṣya malapudgalapiṇḍamoha-
pāśānubaddhahṛdayaṃ svayamāgato'si //

Though you are so subtle, sublime and mysterious as well as most grand, stupendous and majestic that you are not the subject matter for comprehension, understanding, debate and grasp by the mind and intellect as well as the sense organs (senses and perceptions) in this

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world, you still have mercifully and graciously come here yourself to give your holy Darshan (divine view) to me inspite of realising (recognising) that I am a dude and stone-hearted (i.e. emotionless) one who has fallen in the dead (dry, dark) well represented by various worldly attachments and ties, such as sons, kith, kin and the household, under the spell (influence) of your delusion creating powers called Maya. My heart, under Maya's influence, is shackled by the attachments that I have with this puppet-like body consisting essentially of abhorable and reprehensible things such as faecal matters and urine (i.e. excreta)! (28).

त्वं सर्वभूतहृदयेषु कृतालयोऽपि त्वन्मन्त्रजाप्यविमुखेषु तनोषि मायाम्।
त्वन्मन्त्रसाधनपरेष्वपयाति माया सेवानुरूपफलदोऽसि यथा महीपः॥29॥

tvaṃ sarvabhūtahṛdayeṣu kṛtālayopi
tvanmantrajāpyavimukheṣu tanoṣi māyām /
tvanmantrasādhanapareṣvapayāti māyā
sevānurūpaphalado'si yathā mahīpaḥ //

Though you dwell in the heart of all the creatures uniformly, still those who do not repeat (recite, remember, meditate upon, chant) your holy Mantra, are enchanted and trapped (i.e. captivated, influenced, enthralled, under the magical spell of and held in sway) by your Maya (delusion creating powers), while those who are diligent, sincere and steadfast in having devotion for as well as having a firm conviction and faith in the divine powers and potentials of your holy and divine Mantra, are able to avoid (or get over with, or remove the deluding effects of) your Maya. In this manner, just like a wise, judicious and just king, you give fruits (rewards) to all according to their service (deeds, actions, diligence, sincerity, faith, conviction and belief) (29).

विश्वस्य सृष्टिलयसंस्थितिहेतुरेकस्त्वं मायया त्रिगुणया विधिरीशविष्णू।
भासीश मोहितधियां विविधाकृतिस्त्वं यद्वद्रविः सलिलपात्रगतो ह्यनेकः॥30॥

viśvasya sṛṣṭilayasaṁsthiti heturekastvaṃ
māyayā triguṇayā vidhirīśaviṣṇū /
bhāsīśa mohitadhiyāṃ vividhākṛtistvaṃ
yadvadraviḥ salilapātragato hyanekaḥ //

Oh the Lord of the universe! Actually it is only you who, being the cause of the origin, sustenance and annihilation of this universe, appear

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in different forms such as that of Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer) and Shiva (the annihilator) by the virtue of your illusion-creating powers represented by Maya. This Maya basically constitutes of three inherent qualities, called 'Triguna', which manifests itself as these Trinity Gods[1]. Similarly, it is you who appear in various forms (such as birds, animals, trees and human beings—the males and the females, etc.) in the sight of people who are under the deceptive and illusionary spell of your Maya just like the same sun appears to be numerous when its image is viewed in different pans containing water (30).

[Note :—[1]Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 20-35, and Canto 4, verse nos.20-32 of this Aranya Kanda which describes this concept of 'Maya' in great detail. Briefly we can say here that there are 3 inherent virtues in all the creatures of this creation which determine their basic nature and temperament. These qualities are integral to all the creatures and decide how they behave and live in this world. The individual creature at the microcosmic level is represented at the macrocosmic level of the cosmos by the Viraat Purush, but these three basic qualities themselves have revealed, at the macro level, in the form of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, called the Trinity Gods. These Gods have their counterparts in this world as the Satvic people, the Rajasic people and the Tamsic ones respectively.

Maya is a word which has two parts, Ma + Ya. The first half has a negative connotation. 'Ma' means 'to measure, mark off, by any standard; to show, to exhibit, to display; to infer, to conclude; to be formed, built, made of', while the second part 'Ya' means 'this or that'. 'Ma' has a negative connotation. Therefore, the composite word Maya means neither this nor that; anything that is not real; that which is deluding, illusionary, deceptive, mirage like and deceitful, and is caused by the ignorance about its truth and reality; something that has no substance or pith; displays no certainty and leads to wrong inference. The term Maya is used to define all these phenomenons. Hence, Maya is a synonym used for all that is deceptive, faulty, false, deluding, ignorance based, illusionary, impostering, deceitful, invisible and para-natural; all that which has no reality or substance; all that is hollow. It creates hallucinations in a creature's mind leading him to believe that what he sees is the truth.

Maya has three basic constituent qualities. Hence it is called 'Trigunmayi' i.e. one which has the three Gunas or qualities. These three Gunas or qualities are— Sat, Raj and Tam. 'Sat' is the most auspicious, virtuous and noblest quality in a man and raises him to a high moral and spiritual pedestal. It marks predominance of righteousness and the highest standards of spirituals and mental evolvement leading to high thoughts, noble actions and righteous behaviour. 'Raj' is the medium quality in a

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person, and it is marked by worldly passions, desires, yearnings and greed. It makes a man more worldly than spiritual. 'Tam' is the third and most lowly of the three qualities and is used has a synonym for darkness and evil. Obviously, 'Tam' means ignorance, delusions and all the forces or qualities that are evil, mean, lowly, miserly, wicked and base. They pull down a man from high pedestal and virtually dump him in the dust yard of creation to rust and decay.

These 3 qualities together, in various permutations and combinations, decide the innate nature of a man; they determines the basic nature, characteristic, temperaments and inclinations of a creature depending upon the ratio and predominance of any one quality as compared to the other two The greater presence of 'Sat' makes a man nobler as compared to a high ratio of 'Tam' which makes him wicked, pervert and evil. Various proportions of these qualities will therefore produce innumerable varieties of creatures having different temperaments, thought processes, behaviours, demeanours and mental setup in this world.]

प्रत्यक्षतोऽद्य भवतश्चरणारविन्दं पश्यामि राम तमसः परतः स्थितस्य।
दृग्रूपतस्त्वमसतामविगोचरोऽपि त्वन्मन्त्रपूतहृदयेषु सदा प्रसन्नः॥31॥

pratyakṣato'dya bhavataścaraṇāravindaṃ
paśyāmi rāma tamasaḥ parataḥ sthitasya /
dṛgrūpatastvamasatāmavigocaro'pi
tvanmantrapūtahṛdayeṣu sadā prasannaḥ //

Oh Sri Ram! Though I am ignorant and lack the depth of knowledge required to realise the truth and reality about you, and you are beyond the scope (or parameters) of ignorance and lack of true knowledge, still I am so fortunate that I am seeing your holy and divine feet in practical/physical terms today. (This goes to prove that—) Though you are invisible to (i.e. not perceived, not experienced, not witnessed, not seen or visualised by) unrighteous people, you still show your benevolence and munificence towards those whose mind, heart and intellect have been purified by doing Japa (constant repetition) of your holy Mantra (which include your holy and divine name) (31).

पश्यामि राम तव रूपमरूपिणोऽपि मायाविडम्बनकृतं सुमनुष्यवेषम्।
कन्दर्पकोटिसुभगं कमनीयचापबाणं दयार्द्रहृदयं स्मितचारुवक्त्रम्॥32॥

paśyāmi rāma tava rūpamarūpiṇo'pi
māyāviḍambanakṛtaṃ sumanuṣyaveṣaṃ /
kandarpakoṭisubhagaṃ kamanīyacāpabāṇaṃ
dayārdrahṛdayaṃ smitacāruvaktraṃ //

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Oh Sri Ram! Though (as the supreme transcendental Brahm) you are without a form and attributes, still I am fortunate that I am watching your manifested form as a most attractive and charming human being which you have assumed on the strength of your own delusion-creating powers. This human form of yours is as radiant as crores (millions) of Kamdeo-cupids. You hold an enchanting bow, which can captivate and vanquish all, either by its strength or by its beauty, as your adornment; your heart is compassionate and malleable (i.e. merciful), while your face looks most attractive and enchanting with its sweet, pleasant and a bewitching smile (32).

सीतासमेतमजिनाम्बरमप्रधृष्यं सौमित्रिणा नियतसेवितपादपद्मम्।
नीलोत्पलद्युतिमनन्तगुणं प्रशान्तं मद्भागधेयमनिशं प्रणमामि रामम्।। 33।।

sītāsametamajināmbaramapradhṛṣyaṃ
saumitriṇā niyatasevitapādapadmaṃ /
nīlotpaladyutimanantaguṇaṃ praśāntaṃ
madbhāgadheyamaniśaṃ praṇamāmi rāmaṃ //

I always, day and night, reverentially bow to Sri Ram who is with Sita, wears a deer skin, is always victorious and invincible, whose lotus-like feet are routinely served by the son of Sumitra (Laxman), whose countenance resembles a blue (i.e. rain bearing dark) cloud having the dazzle of lightening, who is endowed with immeasurable and countless virtues, is most serene, tranquil, placid and peaceful, and is an image (reflection, personification, embodiment) of my good fortunes (33).

जानन्तु राम तव रूपमशेषदेशकालाद्युपाधिरहितं घनचित्प्रकाशम्।
प्रत्यक्षतोऽद्य मम गोचरमेतदेव रूपं विभातु हृदये न परं विकाङ्क्षे।।34।।

jānantu rāma tava rūpamaśeṣadeśa
kālādyupādhirahitaṃ ghanacitprakāśaṃ /
pratyakṣato'dya mama gocarametadeva
rūpaṃ vibhātu hṛdaye na paraṃ vikāṅkṣe //

Oh Sri Ram! Let those who recognise you in your true transcendental form—which is without any attributes or characteristics associated with place, circumstance, time etc., and is a treasury (a source, a fount) of the eternal light of truth and enlightenment—let them be contented and know it as such (or recognise you as such). But

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for me, let this charming image of your personified form as the visible counterpart of that supreme Soul called 'Ram', which I behold in front of me now, be always experienced and enshrined in my heart in this very form. I do not have a desire for (i.e. to meditate, concentrate, have devotion for, worship) any other form of the Lord except that which I behold in front of my eyes right now!' (34).

[Note :—Sutikshan's prayers in verse nos. 28-34 can be called the Gospel according to Sutikshan. It lays stress on the fact that the visible form or the 'Sagun' aspect of the Lord is more dear to a devotee than his invisible, attributeless 'Nirgun' form which finds more favour with the wise, learned and enlightened scholarly people, or those who can be, in modern times, called 'post-graduates' in spiritualism and metaphysics, as it were.]

इत्येवं स्तुवतस्तस्य रामः सुस्मितमब्रवीत्। मुने जानामि ते चित्तं निर्मलं मदुपासनात्।। 35।।
अतोऽहमागतो द्रष्टुं मदृते नान्यसाधनम्। मन्मन्त्रोपासका लोके मामेव शरणं गताः।। 36।।
निरपेक्षा नान्यगतास्तेषां दृश्योऽहमन्वहम्। स्तोत्रमेतत्पठेद्यस्तु त्वत्कृतं मत्प्रियं सदा।। 37।।
सद्भक्तिर्मे भवेत्तस्य ज्ञानं च विमलं भवेत्। त्वं ममोपासनादेव विमुक्तोऽसीह सर्वतः।। 38।।

ityevaṃ stuvastasya rāmaḥ susmitamabravīt /
mune jānāmi te cittaṃ nirmalaṃ madupāsanāt //
ato'hamāgato draṣṭuṃ madṛte nānyasādhanaṃ /
manmantropāsakā loke māmeva śaraṇaṃ gatāḥ //
nirapekṣā nānyagatāsteṣāṃ dṛśyo'hamanvahaṃ /
stotrametatpaṭhedyastu tvatkṛtaṃ matpriyaṃ sadā //
sadbhaktirme bhavettasya jñānaṃ ca vimalaṃ bhavet /
tvaṃ māmopāsanādeva vimukto'sīha sarvataḥ //

When Sutikshan had thus prayed, Sri Ram smiled and said to him, 'Oh sage! I know that your mind, intellect and heart have been purified by my dedicated and sincere devotion and worship (35), and you have no other reliance, support, succour, means, dependence etc. for fulfilling your quest for emancipation and salvation except me; that is why I have come to see you. In this world, those who worship, honour and adore my Mantra, have ardent, unwavering and unflinching devotion for me, stay in my refuge as their only shelter, succour, hope and support (36), remain even, have equanimity and are equitable towards all, and are absorbed (i.e. involved) in contemplation and meditation upon the infinite and endless truth about me and my form—I do give my divine vision (Darshan) to them regularly. Those people who recite this Stotra (prayer, hymn) you have said for me in

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my honour with dedication and faith (37), they get (i.e. are bestowed and blessed with) my pristine pure devotion and they attain enlightenment. You have attained full emancipation and salvation even while you are still alive (i.e. you have gained complete freedom and liberation from the shackles of this mundane, deluding world, as well as from the evil and deluding spell cast by Maya, while still living as an ordinary human being) by the virtue of merely worshipping and having sincere devotion for me (38).

[Note :—The word 'Upasana' in verse no. 38, second line covers the entire gamut of devotion, supplication, worship, dedication, adoration, meditation, contemplation, recitation of the holy Mantra, religious ritual, remembrance of the Lord, service, sacrifices, love/affection et-al for the Lord—all these are the various forms of Upasana of the Lord.

Let us have a brief glimpse of what constitutes Upasana. The worship or adoration of the 'Truth' is called Upasana. This worship can be of a chosen deity or of the pure self. This worship embraces both meditation and contemplation because the worshipper physically and consciously focuses his attention unwaveringly on his object of worship, hence it is meditation, and thinks deeply about the ways to attain his object of worship, hence contemplation. The evolution of human psychology from the humdrum and mundane to higher plane of thought and discrimination is the aim of spirituality and the reward is divinity and self realisation. Therefore, spirituality is centered and established around the theme of Atma/soul which is the pure conscious Spirit residing in the creature.

Thus we see that the discriminating intellect has a major role to play in contemplation because it helps to guide the mind to wade through a sea of knowledge, select what it needs and separate the essence from the clutter, to discriminate between what is 'the real truth' and what is only 'the apparent truth'. It eggs the mind on to reach the final conclusion. Thus, whereas meditation is an important tool for a contemplative life, the latter is more intuition based; it relies heavily on the laboratory of the intellect more than the mind to achieve its purpose.

Obstacles—Now let us have a brief glance at the obstacles in mediation and contemplation. There are four chief types— (i) physiological obstacles such as hunger, thirst, sleep etc. They can be controlled by practice and self-restraint. (ii) The inherent tendency of the mind and the body to go towards pleasing objects and to resist control. This is called the Vasanas and Vrittis of the creature. Perseverance and persistence is needed here. Gentle prodding and cajoling of the mind and disciplining of the body are needed also. (iii) Our own mistakes such as carelessness, disorganised life, overdoing or indulgences in routine matters. The best way to overcome these is moderation. A gradual disciplining is needed here.

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(iv) Uncertainty and lack of proper guidance. Here the scriptures help.

The obstacles have been described by Patanjali in his 'Yog Sutra' as follows— (i) disease, mental laziness and lethargy, doubt, delusions and erroneous perceptions, lack of enthusiasm, attraction and attachment towards gratification of sense organs and their worldly objects, dithering and falling when the goal is almost at hand, grief, distresses of the body, irregular breathing and non-retention of concentration (Patanjali Yog Sutra, 2/31).

The four obstacles described by Acharya Gaupada in his celebrated Vedanta treatise called 'Mandukya Karika' are the following— (i) Laya (state of mental dullness, lack of concentration and even sleep). (ii) Vikshep (restlessness of mind, agitations). (iii) Kashaya (entering of the mind into a stupefied state). (iv) Rasavada (the joy of meditation). The 1st obstacle 'Laya' can be removed by keeping the mind active and agile by proper and regulated life. The 2nd obstacle 'Vikshepa' can be dealt with by forcibly driving away the agitation-causing thoughts from the mind. The 3rd obstacle 'Kashaya' is caused by intense attachment or even aversion to the materialistic world and its objects. The remedy here is to draw the mind away from the world and consciously cultivate noble thoughts. The 4th obstacle 'Rasavada' is a temporary feeling of joy by the seeker. He must stick to his path and not let this temporary joy to overcome his aim of permanence in joy.

According to Yoga doctrines, there are five hindrances— (i) Avidya (ignorance), (ii) Asmita (ego, pride and haughtiness), (iii) Raag (attachment, infatuation), (iv) Dwesha (aversion, malice, ill-will, jealously envy) and (v) Abhinivesh (clinging to life).]

देहान्ते मम सायुज्यं लप्स्यसे नात्र संशयः। गुरुं ते द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ह्यगस्त्यं मुनिनायकम्।
किञ्चित्कालं तत्र वस्तुं मनो मे त्वरयत्यलम्।। 39।।

dehānte mama sāyujyaṃ lapsyase nātra saṁśayaḥ/
guruṃ te draṣṭumicchāmi hyagastyaṃ munināyakaṃ/
kiñcitkālaṃ tatra vastuṃ mano me tvarayatyalaṃ//

When you leave your mortal body, you shall without doubt attain my supreme, blissful, peaceful, holy and divine feet (or find oneness with the Supreme Being). Now I wish to meet your exalted Guru (learned, wise and erudite teacher and moral preceptor) sage Agastya. My heart is eager to spend some days living with him' (39).

सुतीक्ष्णोऽपि तथेत्याह श्वो गमिष्यसि राघव। अहमप्यागमिष्यामि चिराद्दृष्टो महामुनिः।। 40।।
अथ प्रभाते मुनिना समेतो रामः ससीतः सह लक्ष्मणेन।
अगस्त्यसम्भाषणलोलमानसः शनैरगस्त्यानुजमन्दिरं ययौ।। 41।।

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sutīkṣṇo'pi tathetyāha śvo gamiṣyasi rāghava /
ahamapyāgamiṣyāmi cirāddṛṣṭo mahāmuniḥ //
atha prabhāte muninā sameto rāmaḥ sasītaḥ saha lakṣmaṇena /
agastyasambhāṣaṇalolamānasaḥ śanairagastyānujamandiraṃ yayau //

Sutikshan replied, 'Alright, we shall go there tomorrow. I have also not seen the exalted sage for a long time. Hence, I too shall accompany you there' (40). At the crack of dawn the next morning, Sri Ram, together with Sita and Laxman and accompanied by sage Sutikshan, slowly but eagerly wended his way towards the hermitage of sage Agastya's younger brother (named Agni Jivha) to meet and talk with the former (sage Agastya) (41)

***

Aranya Kand — Canto 3

Sri Ram at sage Agastya's hermitage

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

अथ रामः सुतीक्ष्णेन जानक्या लक्ष्मणेन च। अगस्त्यस्यानुजस्थानं मध्याह्ने समपद्यत ।।1।।
तेन सम्पूजितः सम्यग्भुक्त्वा मूलफलादिकम्। परेद्युः प्रातरुत्थाय जग्मुस्तेऽगस्त्यमण्डलम् ।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

atha rāmaḥ sutīkṣṇena jānakyā lakṣmaṇena ca /
agastyasyānujasthānaṃ madhyāhne samapadyata //
tena sampūjitaḥ samyagbhuktvā mūlaphalādikam /
paredyuḥ prātarutthāya jagmuste'gastyamaṇḍalam //

Lord Shiva said, 'Oh Parvati! That afternoon, Sri Ram, accompanied by Sutikshan, Sita and Laxman, reached the place of the younger brother of sage Agastya en-route to the latter's hermitage (1). The younger brother of the sage (whose name was Agni Jivha) duly worshipped and honoured them all and offered them refreshments by way of edible roots, stems and fruits. Next day, as soon as they got up, they moved ahead to sage Agastya's hermitage (2).

सर्वर्तुफलपुष्पाढ्यं नानामृगगणैर्युतम्। पक्षिसङ्घैश्च विविधैर्नादितं नन्दनोपमम् ।।3।।
ब्रह्मर्षिभिर्देवर्षिभिः सेवितं मुनिमन्दिरैः। सर्वतोऽलङ्कृतं साक्षाद् ब्रह्मलोकमिवापरम् ।।4।।

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sarvartuphalapuṣpāḍhyaṃ nānāmṛgagaṇairyutam /
pakṣisaṅghaiśca vividhairnāditaṃ nandanopamam //
brahmarṣibhirdevarṣibhiḥ sevitaṃ munimandiraiḥ /
sarvato'la.ṅkṛtaṃ sākṣād brahmalokamivāparam //

That hermitage was well endowed with all types of fruits and blooming flowers belonging to all the seasons, was served (inhabited) by various types of pleasant animals belonging to the deer family, and it reverberated and echoed with the chirping and clamour of various birds; it resembled the 'Nandan Van' (in its beauty, charm and majesty) (3). It was served by 'Brahmarishis' (i.e. exalted sages and seers who were of a stature equivalent to Lord Brahma, the creator) and 'Devrishis' (i.e. exalted sages and seers who had attained the stature and power possessed by Gods) whose own, individual hermitages surrounded that of sage Agastya's. In this aspect, it (i.e. sage Agastya's hermitage) resembled a duplicate (or a parallel, second) 'Brahmalok' (the abode of Lord Brahma) (4).

[Note :—Evidently, sage Agastya's hermitage was more like a monastery with he himself being the abbot or pontiff and the rest of the sages and seers residing in small huts surrounding the main cottage of Agastya were like monks residing in separate cottages in a monastery or a religious sect headquarters. Here sage Agastya is compared to Lord Brahma, while all other sages and seers who surrounded him were like the different Gods in heaven. Agastya's hermitage resembled the heaven which has been replicated here on earth, complete with its beauty and charm. The Nandan Van referred above is the heavenly garden of the Gods.]

बहिरेवाश्रमस्याथ स्थित्वा रामोऽब्रवीन्मुनिम्। सुतीक्ष्ण गच्छ त्वं शीघ्रमागतं मां निवेदय॥5॥
अगस्त्यमुनिवर्याय सीतया लक्ष्मणेन च। महाप्रसाद इत्युक्त्वा सुतीक्ष्णः प्रययौ गुरोः॥6॥

bahirevāśramasyātha sthitvā rāmo'bravīnmunim /
sutīkṣṇa gaccha tvaṃ śīghramāgataṃ māṃ nivedaya //
agastyamunivaryāya sītayā lakṣmaṇena ca /
mahāprasāda ityuktvā sutīkṣṇaḥ prayayau guroḥ //

Staying outside (at the periphery of) the hermitage, Sri Ram said to Sutikshan, 'Oh Sutikshan! You should go to sage Agastya immediately and inform him politely about my arrival (5) along with Sita and Laxman'. Saying 'it is a very happy news', Sutikshan hastened to his Guru's place (6).

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आश्रमं त्वरया तत्र ऋषिसङ्घसमावृतम्। उपविष्टं रामभक्तैर्विशेषेण समायुतम्।। 7।।
व्याख्यातराममन्त्रार्थं शिष्येभ्यश्चातिभक्तितः। दृष्ट्वागस्त्यं मुनिश्रेष्ठं सुतीक्ष्णः प्रययौ मुनेः।। 8।।

āśramaṃ tvarayā tatra ṛṣisaṅghasamāvṛtam /
upaviṣṭaṃ rāmabhaktairviśeṣeṇa samāyutam //
vyākhyātarāmamantrārthaśiṣyebhyaścātibhaktitaḥ /
dṛṣṭvāgastyaṃ muniśreṣṭhaṃ sutīkṣṇaḥ prayayau muneḥ //

When he reached the spot, he saw that the most exalted sage Agastya was seated, surrounded by a cluster (group) of sages—especially those devoted to Sri Ram (7), and he was explaining to them (i.e. teaching them) the meaning, implications, significance, importance and various connotations of the 'Ram Mantra'. At this moment, Sutikshan approached him (8).

[Note :—This shows that Agastya's hermitage, which was essentially a monastery, also doubled up as a seminary like that of sage Atri. The difference being that in Atri's case, his disciples were young Brahmacharis, while in Agastya's case the students are sages, seers and hermits of repute themselves.]

दण्डवत्प्रणिपत्याह विनयावनतः सुधीः। रामो दाशरथिर्ब्रह्मन् सीतया लक्ष्मणेन च।
आगतो दर्शनार्थं ते बहिस्तिष्ठति साञ्जलिः।। 9।।

daṇḍavatpraṇipatyāha vinayāvanataḥ sudhīḥ /
rāmo dāśarathirbrahman sītayā lakṣmaṇena ca /
āgato darśanārthaṃ te bahistiṣṭhati sāñjaliḥ //

Showing his respects to his Guru Agastya by prostrating like a stick before him, the wise-minded Sutikshan said, 'Oh Brahmin! Dashrath's son Sri Ram, along with Sita and Laxman, has come to have your Darshan (i.e. to meet you), and they are standing outside with palms joined together in submission' (9).

अगस्त्य उवाच

शीघ्रमानय भद्रं ते रामं मम हृदि स्थितम्। तमेव ध्यायमानोऽहं काङ्क्षमाणोऽत्र संस्थितः।। 10।।
इत्युक्त्वा स्वयमुत्थाय मुनिभिः सहितो द्रुतम्। अभ्यगात्परया भक्त्या गत्वा राममथाब्रवीत्।। 11।।
आगच्छ राम भद्रं ते दिष्ट्या तेऽद्य समागमः। प्रियातिथिर्मम प्राप्तोऽस्यद्य मे सफलं दिनम्।। 12।।

agastya uvāca

śīghramānaya bhadraṃ te rāmaṃ mama hṛdi sthitam /
tameva dhyāyamāno'haṃ kāṅkṣamāṇo'tra saṁsthitaḥ //

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ityuktvā svayamutthāya munibhiḥ sahito drutam /
abhyagātparayā bhaktyā gatvā rāmamathābravīt //
āgaccha rāma bhadraṃ te diṣṭyā te'dya samāgamaḥ /
priyātithirmama prāpto'syadya me saphalaṃ dinam //

Sage Agastya said, 'Oh son! You be blessed! You go back and quickly bring here Sri Ram who dwells (eternally and subtly, in a sublime and ethereal form) in my heart. I stay here always remembering him with a fervent desire to have his Darshan (physical divine vision of the Lord; not abstract but real)' (10). Saying this (and not waiting for Sutikshan to bring Sri Ram to that spot), he himself got up most eagerly and spontaneously, and came to meet Sri Ram, accompanied by other hermits and sages. He said to the Lord most reverentially and devotionally (11), 'Oh Sri Ram! Come. Be blessed with all the welfares and auspiciousness. It is a great fortune and privilege for us that we have your company today. Today's day is most rewarding and fulfilling for me because I have received you, who is most dear and loved one for me, as my guest of honour' (12).

रामोऽपि मुनिमायान्तं दृष्ट्वा हर्षसमाकुलः। सीतया लक्ष्मणेनापि दण्डवत्पतितो भुवि।। 13।।
द्रुतमुत्थाप्य मुनिराड्राममालिङ्ग्य भक्तितः। तद्गात्रस्पर्शजाह्लादस्रवन्नेत्रजलाकुलः।। 14।।

rāmo'pi munimāyāntaṃ dṛṣṭvā harṣasamākulaḥ /
sītayā lakṣmaṇenāpi daṇḍavatpatito bhuvi //
drutamutthāpya munirāḍrāmamāliṅgya bhaktitaḥ /
tadgātrasparśajāhlādasravannetrajalākulaḥ //

When Sri Ram saw the sage coming towards him, he was thrilled and exhilarated with joy. He cheerfully lay prostrate on the ground like a stick (to pay his obeisance to the sage) (13). Then the exalted sage, who was like a king amongst his peers, lifted Sri Ram and embraced him affectionately and devotionally. The bliss and happiness that he derived by the touch (contact) with the divine body of Sri Ram made the sage's eyes well-up with tears (of joy, thrill, exhilaration and ecstasy) (14).

गृहीत्वा करमेकेन करेण रघुनन्दनम्। जगाम स्वाश्रमं हृष्टो मनसा मुनिपुङ्गवः।। 15।।
सुखोपविष्टं सम्पूज्य पूजया बहुविस्तरम्। भोजयित्वा यथान्यायं भोज्यैर्वन्यैरनेकधा।। 16।।

gṛhītva karamekena kareṇa raghunandanam /
jagāma svāśramaṃ hṛṣṭo manasā munipuṅgavaḥ //

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sukhopaviṣṭaṃ sampūjya pūjayā bahuvistaram /
bhojayitvā yathānyāyaṃ bhojyairvanyairanekadhā //

Then sage Agastya held one hand of Sri Ram and escorted him most cheerfully to his hermitage (15). There, he seated him (Sri Ram) on a mat, worshipped and adored him duly with all the traditionally established rituals, and offered him refreshments of various seasonal fruits of the forest (16).

सुखोपविष्टमेकान्ते रामं शशिनिभाननम्। कृताञ्जलिरुवाचेदमगस्त्यो भगवानृषिः।। 17।।
त्वदागमनमेवाहं प्रतीक्षन्समवस्थितः। यदा क्षीरसमुद्रान्ते ब्रह्मणा प्रार्थितः पुरा।। 18।।
भूमेर्भारापनुत्त्यर्थं रावणस्य वधाय च। तदादि दर्शनाकाङ्क्षी तव राम तपश्चरन्।
वसामि मुनिभिः सार्धं त्वामेव परिचिन्तयन्।। 19।।

sukhopaviṣṭamekānte rāmaṃ śaśinibhānanam /
kṛtāñjaliruvācedamagastyo bhagavānṛṣiḥ //
tvadāgamanamevāhaṃ pratīkṣansamavasthitaḥ /
yadā kṣīrasamudrānte brahmaṇā prārthitaḥ purā //
bhūmerbhārāpanuttyarthaṃ rāvaṇasya vadhāya ca /
tadādi darśanākāṅkṣī tava rāma tapaścaran /
vasāmi munibhiḥ sārdhaṃ tvāmeva paricintayan //

When Sri Ram was sitting (resting, relaxing) comfortably alone, Lord Agastya, who was like a Lord of the sages and hermits, said to Sri Ram, who was like a full moon, with palms joined together in submission (17), 'Oh Sri Ram! Since the time when near the 'Kshirsagar' (the legendary ocean of milk), Lord Brahma had prayed to you to kill Ravana in order to remove the burden of the earth, I have been living here along with other hermits, sages and seers with a sincere and eager desire to have your divine, holy Darshan, doing Tapa (austerities and penances), and always remembering and thinking about you and patiently waiting for your auspicious arrival one day (18-19).

सृष्टेः प्रागेक एवासीर्निर्विकल्पोऽनुपाधिकः। त्वदाश्रया त्वद्विषया माया ते शक्तिरुच्यते।। 20।।
त्वामेव निर्गुणं शक्तिरावृणोति यदा तदा। अव्याकृतमिति प्राहुर्वेदान्तपरिनिष्ठिताः।। 21।।

sṛṣṭeḥ prāgeka evāsīrnirvikalpo'nupādhikaḥ /
tvadāśrayā tvadviṣayā māyā te śaktirucyate //
tvāmeva nirguṇaṃ śaktirāvṛṇoti yadā tadā /
avyākṛtamiti prāhurvedāntaparinisṭhitāḥ //

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In the beginning of this creation you were all alone, were without an alternative, and without any attributes and honours (i.e. there was nothing else besides you). 'Maya'[1]—which relies upon you, is sustained by you, dwells in you and which has you as its subject or focus—is said to be a manifestation of your own stupendous, cosmic energy and magical, mysterious powers (which are infinitely potent, intensely effective and most incomprehensible for the mind-intellect to understand and decipher) (20). When this 'Maya-Shakti' (deluding, mystical powers and cosmic, infinite creative energy) surrounds your 'Nirgun' form[2] as a transparent sheath, veil or cover, it is called 'Avyakrit'[3] by those who are well steeped and well versed in the philosophy of Vedant[4] (the philosophy of the Upanishads) (21).

[Note—[1]The concept of Maya has been elaborately defined as a note in Canto 2, verse no.30 of this Aranya Kanda, besides appendix no.2 at the end of the book.

[2]The Nirgun form of the Lord refers to the formless, nameless and attributeless aspect of the supreme transcendental Brahm. This is the basic form of the Lord that is lauded by the Upanishads. It is a vast subject requiring detailed discussion; appendix no.2 deals with it in a succinct manner.

[3]The word 'Avyakrit' means that which has no faults or blemishes or shortcomings, that which is secret, un-manifest, esoteric and mysterious, that which is the hidden cause of anything, and that entity which is called 'Prakriti' or Nature according to the Sankhya Shastra philosophy of Hinduism.

The basic idea here is that Maya is like a transparent sheet which covers the supreme 'truth' in the creation. Since it is transparent, it assumes the attributes of the truth that it covers, because for all practical purposes an ordinary man in unable to see that veil because of its transparency. This is a simple way of understanding what is called 'illusion and Maya vis-ë-vis the Truth and Reality'. Maya nevertheless hides the truthfulness of the Truth, and instead lends its own attributes and characteristics to that Truth known as the 'Nirgun Brahm' by the Upanishads when the latter is observed through this veil, while at the same time assuming the glorious attributes of Brahm itself. So ignorant fools think that the Maya is the real thing, whereas they are actually seeing the 'veiled truth' as observed through this covering of Maya, because the actual 'truth' is hidden from view by this transparent sheet which has lend it its own colour and hue to it . As a result, that Nirgun appears to have some attributes, and it thereby becomes 'Sagun', or the one with attributes and characteristics, by the interference of Maya.

Sage Agastya is precisely referring to this phenomenon here—Lord Ram

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is actually Brahm who has no attributes, no form and no name, but less wise people think the contrary and assign attributes, a form and a name to the supreme transcendental Lord. They call him 'Sri Ram', the son of king Dashrath, the prince of Ayodhya, the husband of Sita etc. Some who are better off in spiritual knowledge and aware of the scriptures call him as a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, and those who are still more educated in the scriptures call him Viraat Purush. On the other hand, those who are really wise, realised and enlightened know the reality behind the false facade of this illusion; they use the knife of wisdom to pierce this veil of ignorance and arrive at the truth about the actual, irrefutable and immutable Truth!]

मूलप्रकृतिरित्येके प्राहुर्मायेति केचन। अविद्या संसृतिर्बन्ध इत्यादि बहुधोच्यते।। 22।।
त्वया संक्षोभ्यमाणा सा महत्तत्त्वं प्रसूयते। महत्तत्त्वादहङ्कारस्त्वया सञ्चोदितादभूत्।। 23।।
अहङ्कारो महत्तत्त्वसंवृतस्त्रिविधोऽभवत्। सात्त्विको राजसश्चैव तामसश्चेति भण्यते।। 24।।

mūlaprakṛtirityeke prāhurmāyeti kecana /
avidyā saṁsṛtirbandha ityādi bahudhocyate //
tvayā saṁkṣobhyamāṇā sā mahattattvaṃ prasūyate /
mahattattvādahaṁkārastvayā sañcoditādabhūt //
ahaṁkāro mahattattvasaṁvṛtastrividho'bhavat /
sāttviko rājasaścaiva tāmasaśceti bhaṇyate //

Some call this (the delusion creating powers, the eternal infinite cosmic energy, the majestic mystical powers of creation) as 'Mool Prakriti' or the essential Nature, and others call it 'Maya' or delusions. It is also known, amongst other things, by the names of 'Avidya' or ignorance and lack of truthful knowledge, or 'Sansriti' which refers to the mortal world consisting of a continuous cycle of 'birth and death' and its interminable chain of relationships and miseries, or 'Bandhan' which refer to the worldly fetters that shackle a creature to this entrapping, mundane and illusionary world (22). Excited (inspired, incited, coaxed) by you, this Maya creates 'Mahattatva' or that which is great, big, stately and majestic, and which possesses such virtues as grandeur, lordliness, glory, magnificence, importance and distinction. From this notion arose what is known as 'Ahankar' or the sense of ego, pride, haughtiness, arrogance and hypocrisy (23). Being infused and completely infested by the sense of greatness and importance (or Mahattatva), this element of Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance and haughtiness) produces three characteristic virtues, and patterns of temperament and behaviour as an integral character of this creation, viz.—Satvic, Rajsic and Tamsic (24).

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[Note :—The three characteristic virtues, patterns of temperament and behaviour are—(i) Satvic = positive qualities of creation, service, devotion, worship, nobility, holiness, auspiciousness, spirituality, righteousness, probity, propriety etc.; (ii) Rajsic = the second category of qualities such as worldly passions, desires and need for expansion and sustenance, creating selfishness and bias to some degree, etc.; these qualities fall between the two extreme qualities of Satvic and Tamsic; (iii) Tamsic = the most base and mean third category characterized by perversions, turpitude, depravity, darkness of ignorance, evils and vices of all sorts leading to deception, destruction, decay, and other negative traits such as wrath, anger etc. See also (a) Ayodhya Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 13-15; (b) Ayodhya Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 11-12; (c) Aranya Kand, Canto 2, verse no. 30; (d) Kishkindha Kand, canto 6, verse nos. 71-72; (e) Lanka Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 51-54.]

तामसात्सूक्ष्मतन्मात्राण्यासन् भूतान्यतः परम्। स्थूलानि क्रमशो राम क्रमोत्तरगुणानि ह।। 25।।
राजसानीन्द्रियाण्येव सात्त्विका देवता मनः। तेभ्योऽभवत्सूत्ररूपं लिङ्गं सर्वगतं महत्।। 26।।
ततो विराट् समुत्पन्नः स्थूलाद् भूतकदम्बकात्। विराजः पुरुषात्सर्वं जगत्स्थावरजङ्गमम्।। 27।।

tāmasātsūkṣmatanmātrāṇyāsan bhūtānyataḥ param /
sthūlāni kramaśo rāma kramottaraguṇāni ha //
rājasānīndriyāṇyeva sāttvikā devatā manaḥ /
tebhyo'bhavatsūtrarūpaṃ liṅgaṃ sarvagataṃ mahat //
tato virāṭ samutpannaḥ sthūlād bhūtakadambakāt /
virājaḥ puruṣātsarvaṃ jagatsthāvarajaṅgamam //

Oh Ram! Out of the 'Tamas' quality (i.e. the third, most base and gross characteristic) emerged the five subtle perceptions of sound, touch, site, taste and smell, and each of these produced their corresponding gross elements, such as the sky/space, air, fire, water and earth respectively (25). Out of the second quality of 'Rajas' had emerged the ten sense organs (making up the gross body of the creature). From the 'Satvic' first quality were produced the patron Gods of these ten sense organs as well as the Mana (the mind-intellect-heart complex governing the emotions, thoughts and intelligence of a creature and forming its subtle body). With the combination of all these three basic and fundamental characteristic qualities (Tamsic, Rajsic, Satvic) and their forms as described above, there emerged (was produced) the miniscule, atom-like and all-incorporating cosmic entity called 'Hiranya-Garbha', which was the macrocosmic subtle body of the entire creation. The other name of this Hiranya-Garbha is the microcosmic subtle body or 'Sutratma' (residing in the individual

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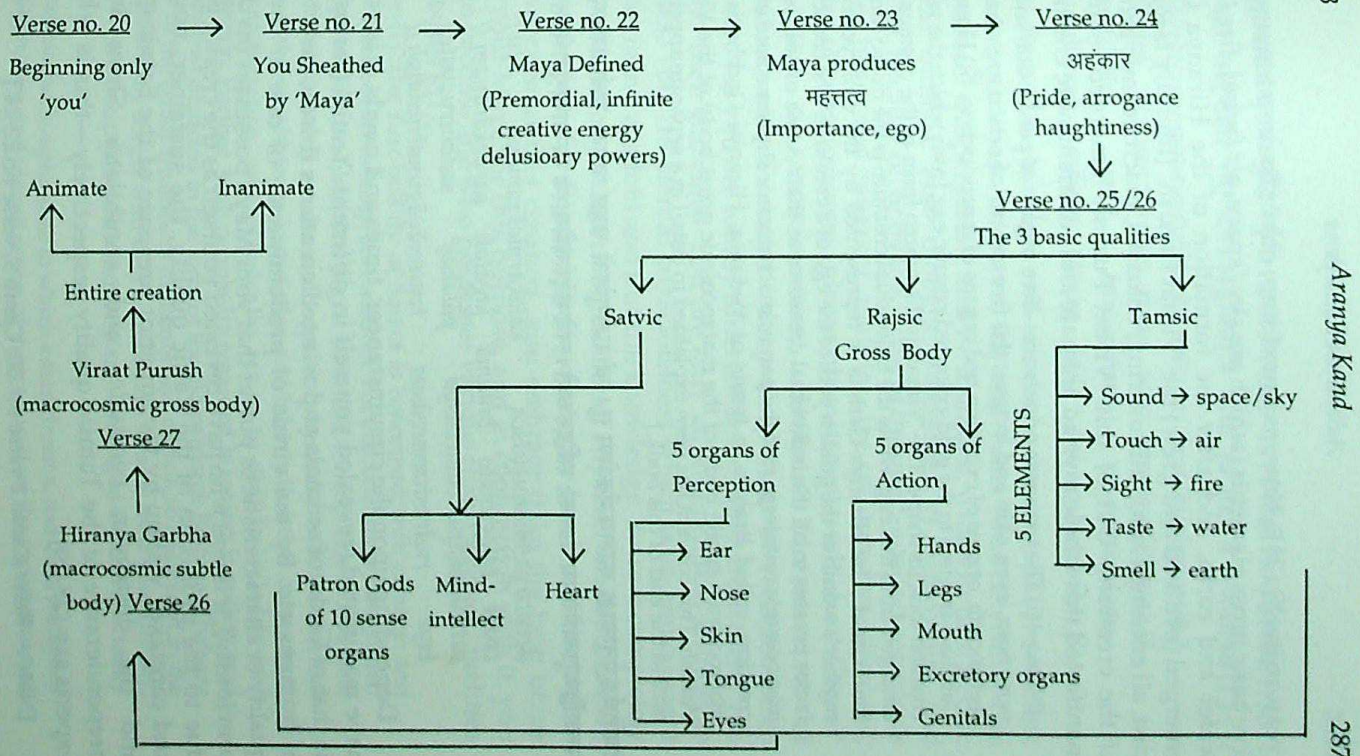
Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse no. 20-27.



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creature itself) (26). Now, as a next step, out of the combination of the five basic gross elements (which are sky/space, air/wind, fire/energy, water and earth, and after the formation of the Hiranya Garbha) emerged (evolved and grew) the 'Viraat Purush' (literally large, huge, vast, all encompassing, all covering, colossus, macrocosmic gross body of the creation). Out of this 'Viraat Purush' emerged, evolved or manifested this whole myriad animate and/or inanimate creation (27).

[Note :—(i) The ten sense organs are—five organs of perception such as ears, nose, eyes, skin and tongue; the five organs of action are—hands, feet, mouth, organs of excretion and organs of reproduction. (ii) Hiranya-Garbha—It refers to the gold-coloured cosmic egg from which the whole creation took its shape. The 'Viraat' is the macro form of the cosmos that emerged from this egg, while the individual creature is the micro form of that Viraat. The Hiranya-Garbha is represented by the embryo in the mother's womb or the golden yolk of the egg of a creature. The conscious factor present in all the individual creatures as their Atma or soul is the microcosmic counterpart of the parent macrocosmic supreme Soul of the creation, called Brahm. In terms of Vedanta, Hiranya-Garbha is the macrocosmic subtle body of the macrocosmic gross body of the Viraat Purush. This concept has been explained in detail in a separate appendix no.2 at the end of this book.]

देवतिर्यङ्मनुष्याश्च कालकर्मक्रमेण तु। त्वं रजोगुणतो ब्रह्मा जगतः सर्वकारणम्।। 28।।
सत्त्वाद्विष्णुस्त्वमेवास्य पालकः सद्भिरुच्यते। लये रुद्रस्त्वमेवास्य त्वन्मायागुणभेदतः।।29।।

devatiryaṅmanuṣyāśca kālakarmakrameṇa tu/
tvaṃ rajoguṇato brahmā jagataḥ sarvakāraṇam//
sattvādviṣṇustvamevāsya pālakaḥ sadbhirucyate/
laye rudrastvamevāsya tvanmāyāguṇabhedataḥ//

Depending upon the circumstances, times and needs, it is you who have manifested/revealed yourself in different 'Yonis' (forms), such as that of Gods, of animals and winged creatures (birds, insects), and of humans etc. By the virtue of predominance of one or the other quality or characteristic or power that your Maya possesses (as defined previously), it is you who have revealed yourself as the creator Brahma due to the profusion of the Rajsic quality, the sustainer, nourisher and caretaker Vishnu by the superior presence of the Satvic quality, and the destroyer, concluder and annihilator Shiva by the preponderance of the Tamsic quality respectively—this is what the experts say (28-29).

[Note :—Refer Canto 2 verse no. 30; Canto 3, verse no.22-24.]

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जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्याख्या वृत्तयो बुद्धिजैर्गुणैः। तासां विलक्षणो राम त्वं साक्षी चिन्मयोऽव्ययः।। 30।।
सृष्टिलीलां यदा कर्तुमीहसे रघुनन्दन। अङ्गीकरोषि मायां त्वं तदा वै गुणवानिव।। 31।।

jāgratsvapnasuṣuptyākhyā vṛttayo buddhijairguṇaiḥ/
tāsāṃ vilakṣaṇo rāma tvaṃ sākṣī cinmayo'vyayaḥ//
sṛṣṭilīlāṃ yadā kartumīhase raghunandana/
aṅgīkaroṣi māyāṃ tvaṃ tadā vai guṇavāniva//

Oh Sri Ram! The intellect and mind of a creature has three basic and inherent qualities viz. Satva, Raj and Tama (that determines its integral nature, temperament and inclinations, which in turn decide its general outlook and thought processes, its behaviours and personality). Because of, or by the virtue of the mind-intellect complex's these three basic and inherent qualities, the creature has (displays) three states of consciousness (planes of existence)—which are 'Jagrat' (waking state of consciousness), 'Swapna' (dream state of consciousness) and 'Sushupti' (deep sleep state of consciousness) respectively. But you are totally different and distinct from these; you are beyond their purview. You are only an independent witness to these states. You are eternal consciousness which is an embodiment of enlightenment, wisdom and truthful knowledge. You are completely faultless, without any taints or blemishes of any kind whatsoever (30). Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! When you desire (wish and decide) to create and expand this creation, you embrace (take the help of, or instruct) your Maya for this purpose, and in conjunction with it, you pretend to become one who possesses various characteristics, qualities and attributes (31).

[Note—(1) The first quality of Sattva is concerned with creation and enhancement of knowledge and wisdom. For this, one has to remain alert and vigilant like Brahma. The Jagrat state also corresponds to that state when the creature is awake and interacts physically with the external world, imbibes whatever knowledge and information that comes to it, gains experience, and physically reacts to that knowledge and information. Further, such people are regarded as seniors in society, and they are best depicted in the form of the old patriarch Brahma. They are awake to the harsh realities of existence and remain so engrossed in the world that they forget who they actually are what is their true identity, and the very basic fact that what they are thinking as the real is actually not.

Next comes the Swapna state in which a man dreams, and it is a metaphor for imagination and visualization of things based on the experience and

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knowledge gained during the Jagrat state. In this state a man lives and does things in a virtual manner in a virtual world of dreams. He sustains and nourishes his imaginations, fantasies and conceptions in a world of dreams which is far away from the harsh realities of life in the physical world. He suffers and enjoys in his dreams, then when he wakes up, he sometimes forgets what that imaginary world was like, but at other times there have been incidents wherein he has got new insight and new inspiration while he was dreaming. This is how Vishnu sustains and nourishes the creation created by Brahma. For all practical purposes, a dreaming man appears to be in a state resembling the state of Samadhi, or a state when an aspirant is in deep meditation and engrossed in contemplation, because he remains aloof and oblivious to the external world, and remains absolutely motionless. But this state is temporary, because he would revert back or wake up to the Jagrat state. That is why Lord Vishnu, who represents this quality of Raj, is depicted as perpetually reclining contemplatively on the bed of the coiled legendary serpent floating on the celestial ocean of milk called Kshirsagar. Since without a vision and imagination one cannot grow, develop and rise, Vishnu is regarded as a maverick player of fantastic tricks in order to sustain and enhance his interests of looking after the creation. Out of these Trinity Gods, it is Vishnu who assumes so many forms and adopts so many tricks to do the needful.

The third quality of Tam is represented by Shiva, and that is why he shows certain traits which are so typical of this quality—viz. being short tempered, and destroying at the shortest notice; his external behaviour and attire also represents the excess of this lowest quality in him. The Sushupta state that he represents stands for being totally oblivious of the external world, and remaining in total bliss. This is exactly how Shiva has been depicted—he remains in a perpetual state of meditation, completely indifferent to the external world, unconcerned and detached from the attractions of the enchanting outside when he can find complete bliss inside his own bosom. The Tam quality marks the presence of ignorance in a greater ratio, and this is depicted by Shiva when he remains ignorant of the niceties of worldly behaviour, notwithstanding his exalted stature of being the greatest amongst the Gods.

(2) Verse no.30 mentions that there are three states of existence of the consciousness. These states and relevant matters have been elaborately described in simple language in a separate appendix no.2 of this book.]

राम माया द्विधा भाति विद्याविद्येति ते सदा। प्रवृत्तिमार्गनिरता अविद्यावशवर्तिनः।
निवृत्तिमार्गनिरता वेदान्तार्थविचारकाः।।32।।
त्वद्भक्तिनिरता ये च ते वै विद्यामयाः स्मृताः। अविद्यावशगा ये तु नित्यं संसारिणश्च ते।
विद्याभ्यासरता ये तु नित्यमुक्तास्त एव हि।।33।।

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rāma māyā dvidhā bhāti vidyāvidyeti te sadā /
pravṛttimārganiratā avidyāvaśavartinaḥ /
nivṛttimārganiratā vedāntārthavicārakāḥ //
tvadbhaktiniratā ye ca te vai vidyāmayāḥ smṛtā /
avidyāvaśagā ye tu nityaṃ saṁsāriṇāśca te /
vidyābhyāsaratā ye tu nityamuktāsta eva hi //

Oh Sri Ram! This 'Maya' of yours always appears (i.e. is manifested, is apparent, is known, is evolved) in two forms—viz. 'Vidya' (truthful knowledge of reality; scholarship, erudition, skills, expertise, wisdom) and 'Avidya' (ignorance, delusions, stupidity, lack of true knowledge and erudition). Those creatures who follow/pursue the mundane path of indulgence in, addiction to and attachments with this artificial and entrapping world of deeds and actions as well as remaining engrossed in its material comforts, are under the spell of the latter (Avidya), while those who understand the implication and the essential meaning and teaching of the Upanishads, who wish to follow/pursue the path that leads to liberation, deliverance, detachment and renunciation, and who are well steeped, steadfast, dedicated and sincere in having devotion for you, in worshipping you, in having faith and conviction in you, are understood to be and recognised as being aware, enlightened, wise, realised and knowledgeable ones.

Again, those who are yoked to (i.e. under the influence of) Avidya are eternally shackled to the deluding, mundane and entrapping world consisting of the endless cycle of birth and death, while those who have acquired Vidya (i.e. those who have become enlightened, wise, realised and truly knowledgeable) are the ones who obtain eternal liberation once and for all (32-33).

[Note—See Ayodhya Kand, Canto 1 verse nos. 20-31; Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 20-24 and Canto 4, verse nos. 20-45.]

लोके त्वद्भक्तिनिरतास्त्वन्मन्त्रोपासकाश्च ये। विद्या प्रादुर्भवेत्तेषां नेतरेषां कदाचन।। 34।।
अतस्त्वद्भक्तिसम्पन्ना मुक्ता एव न संशयः। त्वद्भक्त्यमृतहीनानां मोक्षः स्वप्नेऽपि नो भवेत्।।35।।

loke tvadbhaktiniratāstvanmantropāsakāśca ye /
vidyā prādurbhavetteṣāṃ netareṣāṃ kadācana //
atastvadbhaktisampannā muktā eva na saṁśayaḥ /
tvadbhaktyamṛtahīnānāṃ mokṣaḥ svapne'pi no bhavet //

In this world, 'Vidya' (essential truth, erudition, enlightenment,

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wisdom, truthful knowledge) emerges (sprouts or takes birth, is rooted, is kindled, is unfolded, is evolved and makes its presence felt) in the internal self (heart, mind, intellect) of only those creatures who have 'Bhakti' for you (i.e. are sincere, eager, dedicated and steadfast in your devotion and worship, who have unwavering faith and conviction in you, who have no reliance other than you in this world for their succour and solace), and who concentrate on your holy Mantras and on nothing else (34). Hence, those persons who are endowed with (posses) your Bhakti are, without doubt, liberated (i.e. freed from the fetters that shackles them to this mundane, deluding existence). Verily, there is no scope of ever obtaining emancipation and salvation, even in one's dreams, without having sincere devotion in you, unflinching faith in you and steady conviction in the path shown by you. (35).

किं राम बहुनोक्तेन सारं किञ्चिद्ब्रवीमि ते। साधुसङ्गतिरेवात्र मोक्षहेतुरुदाहृता।। 36।।

kiṃ rāma bahunoktena sāraṃ kiñcidbravīmi te/
sādhusaṅgatirevātra mokṣaheturudāhṛtā//

Oh Sri Ram! What more can I say? I shall tell you the essential and fundamental tenet on this subject—company of 'Sadhus' (i.e. saintly, holy and pious people, those with a pure, sincere and uncorrupt heart, mind and intellect) has been the main cause (way, route, medium) that helps in getting/attaining emancipation and salvation, or achieving liberation and deliverance from the ignorance-based deluding, artificial, impermanent and ensnaring world, and breaking free from its shackles for good (36).

[Note—The qualifying virtues of Sadhus are enumerated in the following verse no. 37-39.]

साधवः समचित्ता ये निःस्पृहा विगतैषिणाः। दान्ताः प्रशान्तास्त्वद्भक्ता निवृत्ताखिलकामनाः।। 37।।
इष्टप्राप्तिविपत्त्योश्च समाः सङ्गविवर्जिताः। संन्यस्ताखिलकर्माणः सर्वदा ब्रह्मतत्पराः।।38।।
यमादिगुणसम्पन्नाः सन्तुष्टा येन केनचित्। सत्सङ्गमो भवेद्यर्हि त्वत्कथाश्रवणे रतिः।।39।।

sādhavaḥ samacittā ye niḥspṛhā vigataiṣiṇaḥ/
dāntāḥ praśāntāstvadbhaktā nivṛttākhilakāmanāḥ//
iṣṭaprāptivipattyośca samāḥ saṅgavivarjitāḥ/
saṁnyastākhilakarmāṇaḥ sarvadā brahmatatparāḥ//
yamādiguṇasampannāḥ santuṣṭā yena kenacit/
satsaṅgamo bhavedyarhi tvatkathāśravaṇe ratiḥ//

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Those persons who are even-minded and stable, have equanimity and forbearance, are serene, placid, unruffled, unwavering, calm and balanced under adversities as well as favourable circumstances, both during sorrows and troubles as well as under happy and joyous situations in this world; those who are without any desires and wants whatsoever; those who do not have any attachment to their worldly assets such as their wealth and sons, nor harbour any desires pertaining to them; those who have restrained, conquered and suppressed their sense organs and their wayward tendencies or the urge for their gratification; those who are of a serene, calm, peaceful and tranquil temperament and mind; those who are sincerely devoted and dedicated to you; those who are devoid of and free from all desires, greed, avarice, yearnings and ambitions of all kinds (37); those who are even-keeled, have equanimity, remain neutral, unaffected, indifferent and aloof even while going through the throes of destruction (unfavourable circumstances) or construction (favourable circumstances); those who are without encumbrances and attachments of any kind; those who abandon and forsake involvement in all types of worldly deeds and getting involved in various actions, i.e. do not regard himself as the 'doer' of any deed, nor expects any reward or punishment for it; those who are always the followers of Brahm (i.e. pursue the path of righteousness that leads to the supreme, eternal One) (38); those who are endowed with 'Yam' and other virtues (e.g., self-restraint of passions and doing penances and austerities); and those who are contented and satisfied with whatever comes their way—such persons who possess these virtues are truly 'Sadhus' (saintly, pious, holy, divine, pure in mind and heart). Whenever one is fortunate to get communion and a chance to interact with such saints, one develops endearment for and interest in your divine stories (i.e. in spiritualism) (39).

[Note :—Verse nos. 37-39 describe the qualities and characteristics of a true saint/Sadhu.]

समुदेति ततो भक्तिस्त्वयि राम सनातने। त्वद्भक्तावुपपन्नायां विज्ञानं विपुलं स्फुटम्॥ 40॥
उदेति मुक्तिमार्गोऽयमाद्यश्चतुरसेवितः। तस्माद्राघव सद्भक्तिस्त्वयि मे प्रेमलक्षणा॥ 41॥
सदा भूयाद्भरे सङ्गस्त्वद्भक्तेषु विशेषतः। अद्य मे सफलं जन्म भवत्सन्दर्शनादभूत्॥ 42॥

samudeti tato bhaktistvayi rāma sanātane/
tvadbhaktāvupapannāyāṃ vijñānaṃ vipulaṃ sphuṭam //

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udeti muktimārgo'yamādyaścaturasevitaḥ /
tasmādrāghava sadbhaktistvayi me premalakṣaṇā //
sadā bhūyāddhare saṅgastvadbhakteṣu viśeṣataḥ /
adya me saphalaṃ janma bhavatsandarśanādabhūt //

Oh Sri Ram! Thence, one is blessed with having Bhakti (i.e. having sincere devotion, firm faith, steadfast dedication, unwavering conviction and firm belief) in you who are the eternal, primeval, ancient and truthful Supreme Being. When this happens, one is bestowed with pristine pure, uncorrupted, undiluted and immense wisdom and knowledge pertaining to you as well as the ultimate and fundamental truth about you (40). This is the prime path (way, method, course, medium) towards emancipation and salvation followed (adopted) by clever and wise ones. Hence, oh Raghav (Sri Ram), let me have eternal and constant Bhakti in you, a Bhakti marked by sincere love and affection, sincere devotion and faith, sincere conviction and belief, sincere humility and submission for and dedication in you! (41). And oh Hari! Let me have communion (contact, interaction) with your devotees (ardent, dedicated followers) for most of the time. Oh Lord! My life has been successful (amply rewarded, very fortunate) that I have the privilege of having your divine, august and holy sight (Darshan) today (42).

[Note :—(i) See also Canto 4, verse nos. 19-52; (ii) verse nos. 20-42 can be called the gospel of sage Agastya.]

अद्य मे क्रतवः सर्वे बभूवुः सफलाः प्रभो। दीर्घकालं मया तप्तमनन्यमतिना तपः।
तस्येह तपसो राम फलं तव यदर्चनम्।। 43।।
सदा मे सीतया सार्धं हृदये वस राघव। गच्छतस्तिष्ठतो वापि स्मृतिः स्यान्मे सदा त्वयि।।44।।

adya me kratavaḥ sarve babhūvuḥ saphalāḥ prabho /
dīrghakālaṃ mayā taptamananyamatinā tapaḥ /
tasyeha tapaso rāma phalaṃ tava yadarcanam //
sadā me sītayā sārdhaṃ hṛdaye vasa rāghava /
gacchatastiṣṭhato vāpi smṛtiḥ syānme sadā tvayi //

Oh Lord! All my 'Yagyas' (sacrifices, religious rituals, penances, austerities, vows etc.) have been completed today (i.e. the aim or object with which I was doing all these have been accomplished today by seeing you). I have done Tapa (austerities, penances, hardships and sufferance) with great diligence and sincerity for a long time. Oh Sri Ram! The physical worship of your divine self that I was able to do

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today is the evident reward of all those Tapas (43). Oh Raghav! You should always reside in my heart along with Sita. Let me always remember you even while going about my daily chores' (44).

इति स्तुत्वा रमानाथमगस्त्यो मुनिसत्तमः। ददौ चापं महेन्द्रेण रामार्थे स्थापितं पुरा।। 45।।
अक्षय्यौ बाणतूणीरौ खड्गो रत्नविभूषितः। जहि राघव भूभारभूतं राक्षसमण्डलम्।। 46।।

iti stutvā ramānāthamagastyo munisattamaḥ/
dadau cāpaṃ mahendreṇa rāmārthe sthāpitaṃ purā//
akṣayyau bāṇatūṇīrau khaḍgo ratnabhūṣitaḥ/
jahi rāghava bhūbhārabhūtaṃ rākṣasamaṇḍalam//

After having done this 'Stuti' (prayers, singing of benedictory hymns) in the praise and honour of Ramanath (literally the Lord of Laxmi, that is Lord Vishnu; here meaning Sri Ram), the most exalted sage Agastya gave Sri Ram Lord Indra's divine bow, two quivers full of arrows which were magically endowed by a none-ending supply of divine arrows, and a gem-studded sword which the sage had got from Indra on some previous occasion in the past. Then he said, 'Oh Raghav! Kill the demons who are like a burden for this earth (45-46).

[Note :—This verse tells us that the divine arms which were used to kill the demons were handed over to Sri Ram by sage Agastya here. These were used to kill Khar, Dushan etc. in Canto 5, verse no. 32. The two quivers were meant one each for the two brothers. Indra's bow was probably meant for Laxman, because previously sage Parashuram had already given Lord Vishnu's bow to Sri Ram when the two had met while the latter was returning to Ayodhya from Janakpur after his marriage. See Baal Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 15-16.]

यदर्थमवतीर्णोऽसि मायया मनुजाकृतिः। इतो योजनयुग्मे तु पुण्यकाननमण्डितः।। 47।।
अस्ति पञ्चवटीनाम्ना आश्रमो गौतमीतटे। नेतव्यस्तत्र ते कालः शेषो रघुकुलोद्वह।। 48।।
तत्रैव बहुकार्याणि देवानां कुरु सत्पते।। 49।।

yadarthamavatīrṇo'si māyayā manujākṛtiḥ/
ito yojanayugme tu puṇyakānanamaṇḍitaḥ//
asti pañcavaṭīnāmnā āśramo gautamītaṭe/
netavyastatra te kālaḥ śeṣo raghukulodvaha//
tatraiva bahukāryāṇi devānāṃ kuru satpate//

You have taken a form of a human being for this particular purpose. After two Yojans (a distance of roughly 16 miles) from here, surrounded by a pristine and verdant (i.e. sanctified, magnificent,

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pleasant, charming, beautiful, comfortable) forest and on the banks of river Gautami, is the hermitage called Panchvati. Both of you belonging to the clan of king Raghu (i.e. both Sri Ram and Laxman) should spend the rest of your forest exile or sojourn period there (47-48). Oh the truthful Lord! Finish many of the works of the Gods which are still pending while you live there' (49).

श्रुत्वा तदागस्त्यसुभाषितं वचः स्तोत्रं च तत्त्वार्थसमन्वितं विभुः।
मुनिं समाभाष्य मुदान्वितो ययौ प्रदर्शितं मार्गमशेषविद्धरिः।।50।।

śrutvā tadāgastyasubhāṣitaṃ vacaḥ
stotram ca tattvārthasamanvitaṃ vibhuḥ /
muniṃ samābhāṣya mudānvito yayau
pradarśitaṃ mārgamaśeṣaviddhariḥ //

Thence, the all-knowing, omniscient, omnipresent, almighty, majestic and magnanimous Lord honoured with the epithet of 'Vibhu', on having heard the pleasant and charming talk as well as the 'Stotras' (hymns) rich and suffused in essential metaphysical and spiritual wisdom and enlightenment sung in his praise and honour by sage Agastya, and having obtained his permission, gladly moved ahead on the path in the direction shown by the sage (50).

***

Aranya Kand — Canto 4

Meeting with Jatau; Sri Ram's sojourn at Panchvati; Preaching Laxman

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

मार्गे व्रजन्ददर्शाथ शैलशृङ्गमिव स्थितम्। वृद्धं जटायुषं रामः किमेतदिति विस्मितः।।1।।
धनुरानय सौमित्रे राक्षसोऽयं पुरः स्थितः। इत्याह लक्ष्मणं रामो हनिष्याम्यृषिभक्षकम्।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

mārge vrajandadarśātha śailaśṛṅgamiva sthitam /
vṛddhaṃ jaṭāyuṣaṃ rāmaḥ kimetaditi vismitaḥ //
dhanurānaya saumitre rākṣaso'yaṃ puraḥ sthitaḥ /
ityāha lakṣmaṇaṃ rāmo hanisyāmyṛṣibhakṣakam //

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Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! While on his way, Sri Ram saw the old (vulture) Jatau sitting like a huge conical mountain. He was astonished at seeing him, wondering 'What is this?' (1). Then he said to Laxman, 'Oh son of Sumitra! Bring my bow. Look, that demon is sitting in front. I will immediately kill this rascal who feeds upon sages and hermits' (2).

तच्छ्रुत्वा रामवचनं गृध्रराड् भयपीडितः। वधार्होऽहं न ते राम पितुस्तेऽहं प्रियः सखा।। 3।।
जटायुर्नाम भद्रं ते गृध्रोऽहं प्रियकृत्तव।। 4।।

tacchrutvā rāmavacanaṃ gṛdhrarāḍ bhayapīḍitaḥ/
vadhārho'haṃ na te rāma pituste'haṃ priyaḥ sakhā//
jaṭāyurnāma bhadraṃ te gṛdhro'haṃ priyakṛttava//

Hearing these words of Sri Ram, the king of vultures (Jatau) was so appalled and terrified by fear that he pleaded, 'Oh Sri Ram! I am not fit to be killed by you because I am your father Dashrath's dear friend. I am a vulture by the name of Jatau. You be blessed! I am your well-wisher (3-4).

पञ्चवट्यामहं वत्स्ये तवैव प्रियकाम्यया। मृगयायां कदाचित्तु प्रयाते लक्ष्मणेऽपि च।। 5।।
सीता जनककन्या मे रक्षितव्या प्रयत्नतः। श्रुत्वा तद्गृध्रवचनं रामः सस्नेहमब्रवीत्।। 6।।

pañcavaṭyāmahaṃ vatsye tavaiva priyakāmyayā/
mṛgayāyāṃ kadācittu priyāte lakṣmaṇe'pi ca//
sītā janakakanyā me rakṣitavyā prayatnataḥ/
śrutvā tadgṛdhravacanaṃ rāmaḥ sasnehamabravīt//

I shall stay in Panchvati with the intention of your welfare and providing you with protection. Some day when Laxman would go to the forest to hunt (5), I shall make sincere efforts to protect Janak Kanya (Sita, the daughter of Janak)'. Hearing these words of the vulture, Sri Ram said affectionately (6)—

साधु गृध्र महाराज तथैव कुरु मे प्रियम्। अत्रैव मे समीपस्थो नातिदूरे वने वसन्।। 7।।
इत्यामन्त्रितमालिङ्ग्य ययौ पञ्चवटीं प्रभुः। लक्ष्मणेन सह भ्रात्रा सीतया रघुनन्दनः।। 8।।
गत्वा ते गौतमीतीरं पञ्चवट्यां सुविस्तरम्। मन्दिरं कारयामास लक्ष्मणेन सुबुद्धिना।। 9।।

sādhu gṛdhra mahārāja tathaiva kuru me priyam/
atraiva me samīpastho nātidūre vane vasan//
ityāmantritamāliṅgya yayau pañcavaṭīṃ prabhuḥ/
lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātrā sītayā raghunandanaḥ//

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gatvā te gautamītīraṃ pañcavaṭyāṃ suvistaram /
mandiraṃ kārayāmāsa lakṣmaṇena subuddhinā //

'Oh king of vultures! Alright, stay near the forest and remain near enough to protect our interests' (7). Giving Jatau his consent, Sri Ram embraced him and, along with brother Laxman and Sita, went to the large Panchvati forest (8). Reaching the banks of river Gautami, he got a large cottage (a thatched dwelling) erected by the expert Laxman for their dwelling (9).

तत्र ते न्यवसन्सर्वे गङ्गाया उत्तरे तटे। कदम्बपनसाम्रादिफलवृक्षसमाकुले।। 10।।
विविक्ते जनसम्बाधवर्जिते नीरुजस्थले। विनोदयन् जनकजां लक्ष्मणेन विपश्चिता।। 11।।
अध्युवास सुखं रामो देवलोक इवापरः। कन्दमूलफलादीनि लक्ष्मणोऽनुदिनं तयोः।। 12।।
आनीय प्रददौ रामसेवातत्परमानसः। धनुर्बाणधरो नित्यं रात्रौ जागर्ति सर्वतः।। 13।।

tatra te nyavasansarve gaṅgāyā uttare taṭe /
kadambapanasāmrādiphalavṛkṣasamākule //
vivikte janasambādhavarjite nīrujasthale /
vinodayan janakajāṃ lakṣmaṇena vipaścitā //
adhyuvāsa sukhaṃ rāmo devaloka ivāparaḥ /
kandamūlaphalādīni lakṣmaṇo'nudinaṃ tayoḥ //
ānīya pradadau rāmasevātatparamānasaḥ /
dhanurbāṇadharo nityaṃ rātrau jāgarti sarvataḥ //

On the northern banks of river Gautami-Ganga, they put up residence at a lonely, serene and disease free (unpolluted) area which was verdant and richly endowed by various fruit-trees such as those of the Kadamb (*Neculea Cadamba*), Panas (Jack-fruit) and Amra (mango) fruits (10). Sri Ram, along with the wise Laxman, started living happily at that place which was equivalent to the abode of Indra (the king of Gods; the heaven) in its glory, majesty, magnificence, charm and pleasantness. He always tried to keep the daughter of Janak (Sita) in good cheer and entertained. Laxman, who was ever eager to serve Sri Ram faithfully, brought edible roots, stems and fruits daily for him, and during the night, he kept awake and maintained a strict vigil with a bow and arrow in hand (to protect Sri Ram and Sita while they slept) (11-13).

स्नानं कुर्वन्त्यनुदिनं त्रयस्ते गौतमीजले। उभयोर्मध्यगा सीता कुरुते च गमागमौ।। 14।।
आनीय सलिलं नित्यं लक्ष्मणः प्रीतमानसः। सेवतेऽहरहः प्रीत्या एवमासन् सुखं त्रयः।। 15।।

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snānaṃ kurvantyanudinaṃ trayaste gautamījale /
ubhayormadhyagā sītā kurute ca gamāgamau //
ānīya salilaṃ nityam lakṣmaṇaḥ prītamānasaḥ /
sevite'harahaḥ prītyā evamāsan sukhaṃ trayaḥ //

They used to bathe daily in the river Gautami. During those days, Sita used to stay betwixt the two brothers (for the purpose of safety) (14). Laxman used to bring water for them daily with a cheerful mind (i.e. most gladly, without grumbling), and served them diligently, humbly and devotedly. In this manner, the three of them began to live there most happily and comfortably (15).

एकदा लक्ष्मणो राममेकान्ते समुपस्थितम्। विनयावनतो भूत्वा पप्रच्छ परमेश्वरम्।। 16 ।।
भगवन् श्रोतुमिच्छामि मोक्षस्यैकान्तिकीं गतिम्। त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष संक्षेपाद्वक्तुमर्हसि।। 17 ।।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं भक्तिवैराग्यबृंहितम्। आचक्ष्व मे रघुश्रेष्ठ वक्ता नान्योऽस्ति भूतले।। 18 ।।

ekadā lakṣmaṇo rāmamekānte samupasthitam /
vinayāvanato bhūtvā papraccha parameśvaram //
bhagavan śrotumicchāmi mokṣasyaikāntikīṃ gatim /
tvattaḥ kamalapatrākṣa saṁkṣepādvaktumarhasi //
jñānaṃ vijñānasahitaṃ bhaktivairāgyabṛṁhitamt /
ācakṣva me raghuśreṣṭha vaktā nānyo'sti bhūtale //

One day, Laxman went to Sri Ram who was sitting alone, and asked him politely (16), 'Oh Bhagwan (Lord)! I wish to hear from your mouth the sure and uncorrupted (i.e. real, truthful, correct) way to attain emancipation and salvation. Hence, oh the lotus-eyed one, describe it to me in brief (17). Oh the most exalted one in Raghu's clan (Sri Ram)! Tell me the truthful knowledge infused and suffused, laced and soaked, with devotion, renunciation and wisdom. In this world, there is no one else to articulately elucidate on this subject other than you' (18).

श्रीराम उवाच

शृणु वक्ष्यामि ते वत्स गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं परम्। यद्विज्ञाय नरो जह्यात्सद्यो वैकल्पिकं भ्रमम्।। 19 ।।
आदौ मायास्वरूपं ते वक्ष्यामि तदनन्तरम्। ज्ञानस्य साधनं पश्चाज्ज्ञानं विज्ञानसंयुतम्।। 20 ।।

śrīrāma uvāca

śṛṇu vakṣyāmi vatsa guhyādguhyataraṃ param /
yadvijñāya naro jahyātsadyo vaikalpakaṃ bhramam //

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ādau māyāsvarūpaṃ te vakṣyāmi tadanantaram /
jñānasya sādhanaṃ paścājjñānaṃ vijñānasaṁyutam //

Sri Ram said, 'Oh son! Listen, I shall now tell you the most secret, untold, mysterious and esoteric knowledge that is very difficult to access and comprehend. But it is so potent and effective that it has the potential to make a man freed immediately (very soon) from the illusion (deception) created by the confusing, confounding and perplexing nature of this world (19). First of all, I shall tell you the fundamental nature and form of 'Maya' (i.e. what Maya truly is?), then I shall tell you the way to achieve/attain 'Gyan' (true knowledge of the reality, erudition, expertise about the reality leading to enlightenment and wisdom), and thereafter I shall describe that Gyan which is based on sound logic, rational and reasoning, and is therefore known as 'Vigyan' (20).

[Note :—The concept of Maya has also been described in the note appended to Canto 2, verse no.30; and Canto 3, verse no.20-35 of this Aranya Kand. A separate appendix no.2 of this book also deals with it.]

ज्ञेयं च परमात्मानं यज्ज्ञात्वा मुच्यते भयात्। अनात्मनि शरीरादावात्मबुद्धिस्तु या भवेत्।। 21।।
सैव माया तयैवासौ संसारः परिकल्प्यते। रूपे द्वे निश्चिते पूर्वं मायायाः कुलनन्दन।। 22।।
विक्षेपावरणे तत्र प्रथमं कल्पयेज्जगत्। लिङ्गाद्यब्रह्मपर्यन्तं स्थूलसूक्ष्मविभेदतः।। 23।।

jñeyaṃ ca paramātmānaṃ yajjñātvā mucyate bhayāt /
anātmani śarīrādāvātmabuddhistu yā bhavet //
saiva māyā tayaivāsau saṁsāraḥ parikalpyate /
rūpe dve niścite pūrvaṃ māyāyāḥ kulanandana //
vikṣepāvaraṇe tatra prathamaṃ kalpayejjagat /
liṅgādyabrahmaparyantaṃ sthūlasūkṣmavibhedataḥ //

Besides these, I shall also tell you that aspect of the basic nature and form of the supreme Soul called 'Parmatma', who is the Lord of all that exists, which can be experienced and witnessed, which is accessible, knowable, discernible, realisable, conceivable and understandable. This eclectic knowledge entitles a person to become free from the fears of this deluding, illusionary, entrapping and mundane world.

[Describing Maya or delusions, ignorance etc., Sri Ram elucidates—] 'Maya' (roughly referring to delusions, ignorance, misconceptions, hallucinations, deceptions) is defined as the tendency

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to identify and correlate the Atma (which is the truthful, pure and conscious 'self', or the soul of the creature) with the body or to those things or substances which are not at all related to the Atma and are extraneous to it (because they are gross, non-eternal, perishable, false and illusionary in essence and by nature; because they lack any and all those virtues which are so characteristic of the entity known as the Atma). This world has been imagined (visualised) due to this Maya. Oh Kulnandan (the son of our clan, i.e. Laxman)! Maya has been conceptualized as having two primary forms (21-22)—one is 'Vikshep' (perplexity of mind, confusion, diversion or distractions from the chosen path, wavering, fickleness and their incumbent sorrows and agitations), and the other is 'Awaran' (covering, envelop, veil or a sheath of ignorance and misconception which covers or hides the truth). Out of these two, the first one, 'Vikshep' (i.e. the power to create delusions, to tendency to deflect from the truth, to weave illusions and create a web of confusions that lead to perplexity), creates the imaginary world consisting of the entire gamut of subtle and gross qualities or elements that constitute this creation, extending from the microcosmic individual creature right up to the supreme Brahm, by the virtue of differentiating between them. That is, Maya creates a deception that Brahm and the rest of the subtle as well as the gross creation—both the animate as well as the inanimate, both at the microcosmic as well as the macrocosmic level, both at the plain of the individual creature as well as at the celestial plain of the vast cosmos—are two different and distinct entities, whereas the truth is quite the opposite. For, it is the some Brahm that has revealed in all these forms. In simple terms, in day to day language, it means 'by differentiating between you and me, your and mine' etc, which is the cause of all schisms and dichotomy in this world. This also creates the false sense of 'duality' where there is none. (23).

[Note :—See also Canto 3, verse nos. 20-42 of Aranya Kand and Canto 6, verse nos. 51-57 of Lanka Kand.]

अपरं त्वखिलं ज्ञानरूपमावृत्य तिष्ठति। मायया कल्पितं विश्वं परमात्मनि केवले।। 24।।
रज्जौ भुजङ्गवद् भ्रान्त्या विचारे नास्ति किञ्चन। श्रूयते दृश्यते यद्यत्स्मर्यते वा नरैः सदा।।25।।
असदेव हि तत्सर्वं यथा स्वप्नमनोरथौ। देह एव हि संसारवृक्षमूलं दृढं स्मृतम्।। 26।।

aparaṃ tvakhilaṃ jñānarūpamāvṛtya tiṣṭhati /
māyayā kalpitaṃ viśvaṃ paramātmani kevale //

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rajjau bhujaṅgavad bhrāntyā vicāre nāsti kiñcana /
śrūyate dṛśyate yadyatsmaryate vā naraiḥ sadā //
asadeva hi tatsarvaṃ yathā svapnamanorathau /
deha eva hi saṁsāravṛkṣamūlaṃ dṛḍhaṃ smṛtam //

The second power of Maya is called 'Awaran' (cover). It completely surrounds and perpetually covers 'Gyan' (truthful knowledge, erudition, wisdom, enlightenment, self-realisation) in a sheath or veil which either hides or at least taints the truth (about the essential, rightful knowledge of the true nature of the soul or the pure conscious 'self') in a sustained manner. The consequence is that this whole world is an imaginary conception having its origin in the deceptions created by this Maya, while the only thing that is true and real is the supreme and transcendental entity called the Parmatma (supreme Soul) (24).

Like the false fear created by the ignorance of the reality that makes one erroneously belief that there is a snake when one sees a length of lifeless rope, on deep thought and contemplation we get the insight that everything is false and imaginary, with no essence and pith in it. Whatever people always hear, see and remember (25) are all false like a dream, and is only the result of their fertile imagination. The body is like the strong root of this deluding world-like tree (because it is due to the body that one perceives this world, sees it, hears it, feels it, smells it and gets involved with it; it is the body by which one enjoys it, develops various relationships in it, creates attachments or hatreds with it or renounces it, does good or bad deeds in it, and generally gets tangled in it.) (26).

तन्मूलः पुत्रदारादिबन्धः किं तेऽन्यथात्मनः ।। 27 ।।
देहस्तु स्थूलभूतानां पञ्च तन्मात्रपञ्चकम्। अहंकारश्च बुद्धिश्च इन्द्रियाणि तथा दश ।। 28 ।।
चिदाभासो मनश्चैव मूलप्रकृतिरेव च। एतत्क्षेत्रमिति ज्ञेयं देह इत्यभिधीयते ।। 29 ।।
एतैर्विलक्षणो जीवः परमात्मा निरामयः। तस्य जीवस्य विज्ञाने साधनान्यपि मे शृणु ।। 30 ।।

tanmūlaḥ putradārādibandhaḥ kiṃ te'nyathātmanaḥ //
dehastu sthūlabhūtānāṃ pañca tanmātrapañcakam /
ahaṁkāraśca buddhiśca indriyāṇi tathā daśa //
cidābhāso manaścaiva mūlaprakṛtireva ca /
etatkṣetramiti jñeyaṃ deha ityabhidhīyate //

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etairvilakṣaṇo jīvaḥ paramātmā nirāmayaḥ /
tasya jīvasya vijñāne sādhanānyapi me śṛṇu //

It is this body that is the root cause of one having different worldly ties such as those pertaining to his sons, his wife and his other kith and kin (which lead to the fetters of attachments and worries about them). Otherwise, say, what has the Atma got to do with it? (27). The Atma resides in a realm called the 'body'. This body consists of the certain subtle components—viz. (a) five gross elements, (b) the five subtle sense perceptions, certain inherent qualities and characteristic traits that form and decide the basic nature and temperament of a creature—(c) such as the quality of 'Ahankar', and (d) the virtue of having 'Buddhi'.

Besides these, there are other components, such as (e) the ten sense organs (five organs of perception and five organs of action) (28), (f) the reflection of the supreme consciousness in the soul or Atma present inside the bosom of the body that lends consciousness to the latter, (g) the 'Mana' consisting of the mind and the heart (or the various thoughts and emotions experienced by the body), and (h) 'Prakriti' which refers to the basic nature, temperament and inclinations that are inherent and an integral part of the creature's thought processes and his personality.

A combination of all these (from 'a' to 'h' above) should be regarded as the 'area' or 'domain' of the Atma. It is also known as the 'body' in which the Atma resides (29).

The Jiva (the living being) is faultless and pure, it is innocent and beyond reproach, because it is an embodiment, a personification, a reflection or an image of the Parmatma who is the supreme Soul of the creation, and who is immaculate, uncorrupt, pristine pure, beyond reproach and reproof, and is pure consciousness and truthful.

Now I shall tell you some methods and means to recognise and understand what that 'Jiva' actually is. Listen carefully (30)—

[Note—(1) The five gross elements in creation mentioned in (a) above are— earth, water, fire, air, sky.

(2) The five subtle sense perceptions mentioned in (b) above are— smell, touch, taste, sight, hearing.

(3) The quality called Ahankar mentioned in (c) above briefly means the notion of having pride, ego, haughtiness and hypocrisy.

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(4) The virtue of Buddhi as mentioned in (d) above can be briefly described as the power to think rationally and intelligently; the virtues of wisdom and intelligent thought processes which are the functions of the mind-intellect complex and discrimination faculty of the creature.

(5) The ten sense organs mentioned in (e) above are the following :—five organs of perceptions which are eyes (for sight), ears (for hearing), nose (for smelling), tongue (for tasting) and skin (for touching and feeling); and five organs of actions which are hands, legs, mouth, genitals and excretory.]

जीवश्च परमात्मा च पर्यायो नात्र भेदधीः। मानाभावस्तथा दम्भहिंसादिपरिवर्जनम्।। 31।।
पराक्षेपादिसहनं सर्वत्रावक्रता तथा। मनोवाक्कायसद्भक्त्या सद्गुरोः परिसेवनम्।। 32।।

jīvaśca paramātmā ca paryāyo nātra bhedadhīḥ /
mānābhāvastathā dambhahiṁsādiparivarjanam //
parākṣepādisahanaṃ sarvatrāvakratā tathā /
manovākkāyasadbhaktyā sadguroḥ parisevanam //

The Jiva (the individual living being represented by the microcosmic soul) and Parmatma (the Supreme Being who is the Lord of creation and represents the macrocosmic Soul of creation and the primary entity from which the rest of the creation evolved) are synonymous with each other—both mean and indicate the same entity. Hence, one should not distinguish between the two of them; one should not have a notion of duality.

[Now the sage enumerates the virtues that help in attaining enlightenment and acquiring wisdom about the ultimate truth and reality.] One should be far from having arrogance, ego, pride, haughtiness, vanity and hypocrisy; one should forsake boast, deceit, impostering and wickedness as well as all forms of violence and causing harm to others in any form (31); one should tolerate with equanimity, fortitude and forbearance false accusations, insinuations, aspersions and rebukes made by others; one should be of a universally simple and humble temperament and outlook; one should devotedly, sincerely and diligently serve a true Guru (a selfless and wise teacher, guide and moral preceptor) by one's mind and heart, by speech and words, and by the body (32).

बाह्याभ्यन्तरसंशुद्धिः स्थिरता सत्क्रियादिषु। मनोवाषायदण्डश्च विषयेषु निरीहता।। 33।।
निरहङ्कारता जन्मजराद्यालोचनं तथा। असक्तिः स्नेहशून्यत्वं पुत्रदारधनादिषु।। 34।।
इष्टानिष्टागमे नित्यं चित्तस्य समता तथा। मयि सर्वात्मके रामे ह्यनन्यविषया मतिः।। 35।।

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bāhyābhyantarasaṁśuddhiḥ sthiratā satkriyādiṣu /
manovākkāyadaṇḍaśca viṣayeṣu nirīhatā //
nirahaṅkāratā janmajarādyālocanaṃ tathā /
asktiḥ snehaśūnyatvaṃ putradāradhanādiṣu //
iṣṭāniṣṭagame nityaṃ cittasya samatā tathā /
mayi sarvātmake rāme hyananyaviṣayā matiḥ //

One should be pure both outwardly as well as inwardly; one should be eager and diligent in doing righteous, noble, auspicious, virtues and good deeds; one should have self restraint and exercise discipline over the mind and intellect, over the speech and words spoken, and over the body and its actions and deeds; one should not be indulgent in sensual pleasures of this material world (33); one should be totally free from having the negative traits such as pride, ego, haughtiness and arrogance (Ahankar); one should think and contemplate over the miseries, agonies and tribulations caused by and associated with birth, death, disease and old age (for this would inculcate detachment and renunciation in him and prevent him from indulgence in the gross body, attempts at its gratification, and remaining too much enamoured with it and the external world); one should not be too overly infatuated, involved, fascinated, fond, engrossed or attached with women, sons and wealth (literally, the entire worldly property and family, because they are the concern of the body and not the Atma which has got nothing to do with either the world or the body which interacts with it) (34); one should be even minded, remain unruffled, unmoved and steady, have forbearance, fortitude and equanimity during both favourable and/or unfavourable circumstances as well as during honour or rebuke; one should unwaveringly focus and devotedly concentrate his mind and intellect upon me, Ram, who is the 'soul or Atma' of all the creatures (35).

जनसम्बाधरहितशुद्धदेशनिषेवणम्। प्राकृतैर्जनसङ्घैश्च ह्यरतिः सर्वदा भवेत्।। 36 ।।
आत्मज्ञाने सदोद्योगो वेदान्तार्थावलोकनम्। उक्तैरेतैर्भवेज्ज्ञानं विपरीतैर्विपर्ययः।। 37 ।।

janasambādharahitaśuddhadeśaniṣevaṇam /
prākṛtairjanasaṅghaiśca hyaratiḥ sarvadā bhavet //
ātmajñāne sadodyogo vedāntārthāvalokanam /
uktairetairbhavejjñānaṃ viparītairviparyayaḥ //

One should reside (for the purpose of meditation, concentration, peace, serenity and tranquility of mind) at a secluded/lonely place

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which is sanctified and compatible (i.e. the general ambience or atmosphere of the place is conducive to spiritual pursuits); one should be always indifferent to, unaffected by, untangled from, uninvolved with and not bothering about people who can be classified as being 'worldly' (i.e. those whose main aim is the pursuit of the world and gratification of their sense organs; they live and die for it rather than for spiritual pursuits) (36); one should always endeavour to make diligent and sincere efforts to try to understand the nature of the pure or true self, and should contemplate/ponder/reflect upon the meaning and teachings of Vedanta.

By following these sacred paths (i.e. observing these rules and tenets, and by inculcating them in their daily lives) a seeker finds 'Gyan' (true knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment), while adopting the opposite behaviour results in an opposite effect (i.e. one gets 'Agyan'—ignorance, delusions, entrapments, disenchantments, disillusionments, frustrations etc.) (37).

[Note :—Verse nos. 31-37 tell us the noble way by which we can not only obtain enlightenment but also tranquility of mind even while living in this world. Especially, verse no. 36 should not be misconstrued as advising running away from the world to a forest—but it implies that one's own bedroom, house and by extension even the larger work place or the immediate surroundings can effect us only when we think that they exist at all and we are in some way related to it and effected by it. The subtle meaning is to 'turn inwards' amidst the cacophony and clamour that is present in the external noisy world outside, for real and truthful peace comes from inside and it is futile to seek it outside. The verse also means that one should avoid pervert and selfish world which are hindrance in one's final liberation and deliverance from the shackles of the body and the seemingly interminable cycle of birth and death.]

बुद्धिप्राणमनोदेहाहंकृतिभ्यो विलक्षणः। चिदात्माहं नित्यशुद्धो बुद्ध एवेति निश्चयम्।। 38।।
येन ज्ञानेन संवित्ते तज्ज्ञानं निश्चितं च मे। विज्ञानं च तदैवैतत्साक्षादनुभवेद्यदा।। 39।।

buddhiprāṇamanodehāhaṅkṛtibhyo vilakṣaṇaḥ/
cidātmāhaṃ nityaśuddho buddha eveti niścayam//
yena jñānena saṁvitte tajjñānaṃ niścitaṃ ca me/
vijjñānaṃ ca tadaivaitatsākṣādanubhavedyadā//

Describing what is the meaning of 'Gyan and Vigyan', Sri Ram elucidates—] That which kindles enlightenment and awakens the realisation that the entity known as 'I' is a stranger to, is separate and distinct from, and is independent of other entities known as (1) Buddhi

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(intelligence and the faculty of discrimination, rational thoughts, wit, comprehension, sagacity), (2) Pran (vital wind forces of life, the breath that injects life and senses in the body, the vitality and senses present in a creature that helps to distinguish between animate and inanimate ones), (3) Mana (the heart and mind, the emotions and thoughts, dispositions and inclinations, intentions and desires, attention and purpose), (4) Deha (the 'body' consisting of the ten external gross sense organs of perceptions and actions, the subtle mind-intellect complex, and the causal body which harbours the Atma as the pure consciousness of the creature), and (5) Ahankar (the notion of ego, false self assertion, vanity, arrogance, haughtiness and pride etc.), but is the 'Atma' (the microcosmic soul which is an image of the macrocosmic supreme Soul; the pure self; the true identity of the creature) which is eternal and infinite, is pristine pure, is a fount of wisdom and enlightenment, and is pure consciousness—this realisation or awareness is called 'Gyan'; this is my conclusion and affirmation, this is what I have deduced and proclaim.

When this is witnessed or experienced in practical terms, it is known as 'Vigyan' (or logical derivation, confirmation and affirmation of certain things known in theory and now ratified as the unequivocal truth and the irrefutable fact, reasoned acknowledgement, or actual witness of facts so that there is no doubt or confusion as to their authenticity, veracity and truth. In other words, Vigyan is experimental Gyan, or Gyan put to practice by following the guidelines of Vedant) (38-39).

[Note :—See also Canto 3, verse nos. 32-35 of Aranya Kand and Canto 5, verse no. 9-58 of Uttar Kand.]

आत्मा सर्वत्र पूर्णः स्याच्चिदानन्दात्मकोऽव्ययः। बुद्ध्याद्युपाधिरहितः परिणामादिवर्जितः।। 40।।
स्वप्रकाशेन देहादीन् भासयन्ननपावृतः। एक एवाद्वितीयश्च सत्यज्ञानादिलक्षणः।। 41।।
असङ्गः स्वप्रभो द्रष्टा विज्ञानेनावगम्यते। आचार्यशास्त्रोपदेशादैक्यज्ञानं यदा भवेत्।।42।।
आत्मनोर्जीवपरयोर्मूलाविद्या तदैव हि। लीयते कार्यकरणैः सहैव परमात्मनि।।43।।

ātmā sarvatra pūrṇaḥ syāccidānandātmako'vyayaḥ /
buddhyādyupādhirahitaḥ pariṇāmādivarjitaḥ //
svaprakāśena dehādīn bhāsayannanapāvṛtaḥ /
eka evādvitīyaśca satyajñānādilakṣaṇaḥ //
asaṅgaḥ svaprabho draṣṭā vijñānenāvagamyate /
ācāryaśāstropadeśādaikyajñānaṃ yadā bhavet //

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ātmanorjīvaparayormūlāvidyā tadaiva hi /
līyate kāryakaraṇaiḥ sahaiva paramātmani //

[Now the Lord describes the salient features of the Atma.] The grand and majestic, magnificent and mysterious entity known as the 'Atma' is all-complete, self sufficient and wholesome in all respects; it is an image, an embodiment and a fount of eternal bliss, happiness, peace and tranquility; it is characterized by the unique quality that it does not decay and is beyond destruction (i.e. it is imperishable); it is beyond the purview and comprehension of the mind-intellect complex as well as in no need of any honours and titles and epithets to establish and recognise its glories and majesties; and is also not subjected to the results and effects, to any reward or punishment for any deeds done and actions taken by the body of the creature (simply because the Atma is an independent entity as described in verse nos.39-39 above) (40).

Though it lends a sublime glow or divine halo to the body, called the aura, by its own powers of illumination (or its divine effulgence effusing and radiating from it), it remains without any such halo or glow around itself[1]. It is peerless and matchless, it is unique and unparallel. It has the form of truthful wisdom, sagacity, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment (41).

It is without any company, is independent and free from all encumbrances; it is self-illuminated, self-glorious, self-effulgent and self-enlightened; and it is a witness to all as well as a witness for all.

These facts are established by the virtue of Vigyan (practical application of theoretical knowledge as expounded by the Vedas and the Upanishads, and taught by the wise teacher, and witnessed by one by contemplation and deep ponderings and insight). When one becomes aware of the basic and fundamental fact about the oneness of the Atma with the Parmatma as a result of teaching of a wise moral preceptor (a Guru) or self study of scriptures, it is then that Avidya (ignorance and delusions), along with the instruments that it employs, such as the various deeds and their causes (both of which are imaginary and misconceived in the first place, and which are the reasons that trap the creature in the vicious cycle of actions and reactions, rewards and punishments, hopes and aspirations, one deed leading to another), collapses, dissolves and vanishes in the vast ocean

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represented by the Parmatma, which is the supreme Truth and Reality. This obliterates this Avidya for good (42-43).

[Note :—Please refer to Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse no. 47 also. The concept of Atma and Avidya has been explained in appendix no.2 of this book.

[1]An example would help understand the phenomenon better. A full bright moon in the night sky lights up the world with its subtly soothing silvery light; the moon appears like a glowing disc in the surrounding dark space when the sky is crystal clear, and the earth is drenched with its beautiful light. But when there is dust, high clouds, haze or the presence of other impurities in the atmosphere, the same glorious moon appears to have a halo around it, which looks like surrounding the moon in a translucent veil or shroud. This is exactly how the self-illuminated Atma looks to a spiritual 'seer'. The body in this example is the earth, the haze resembles the different imperfections of the mind based on ignorance, whereas the illuminated moon is the Atma.]

सावस्था मुक्तिरित्युक्ता ह्युपचारोऽयमात्मनि। इदं मोक्षस्वरूपं ते कथितं रघुनन्दन।। 44।।
ज्ञानविज्ञानवैराग्यसहितं मे परात्मनः। किन्त्वेतद्दुर्लभं मन्ये मद्भक्तिविमुखात्मनाम्।।45।।

sāvasthā muktirityuktā hyupacāro'yamātmani /
idaṃ mokṣasvarūpaṃ te kathitaṃ raghunandana //
jñānavijñānavairāgyasahitaṃ me parātmanaḥ /
kintvetaddurlabhaṃ manye madbhaktivimukhātmanām //

This stage when Avidya (ignorance, delusions, lack of true knowledge) vanishes and frees the creature from its clutches is called 'Moksha', which is liberation and deliverance from the shackles of ignorance and delusions leading to emancipation and salvation of the soul of the creature. As for the soul (Atma), this is just like a remedy to cure it (or wash it) of all the dirt that has got stuck to it in the course of its long journey through various lives (because in actual fact, the state of emancipation and salvation is not strange or unknown to the soul—it is its intrinsic natural state of being, even as a body has a natural tendency to stay healthy and fight off infections and diseases on its own accord. But some times, antibiotic medicines and other such remedies are needed to help it to fight its own battle against diseases). Oh Raghunandan (Laxman)! (44).

I have told you the essence of what is the meaning of obtaining Moksha, along with what is Gyan, Vigyan, Vairagya (renunciation, non-attachment) and Parmatma. (So far so good, but—) For those who are devoid of my Bhakti (defined below in verse no. 47-51),

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I regard this attainment (of salvation) as very difficult and rare to access (45).

[Note :—Refer Lanka Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 51-57 also.]

चक्षुष्मतामपि तथा रात्रौ सम्यङ् न दृश्यते। पदं दीपसमेतानां दृश्यते सम्यगेव हि।। 46।।
एवं मद्भक्तियुक्तानामात्मा सम्यक् प्रकाशते। मद्भक्तेः कारणं किञ्चिद्वक्ष्यामि शृणु तत्त्वतः।।47।।

cakṣuṣmatāmapi tathā rātrau samyaṅ na dṛśyate/
padaṃ dīpasametānāṃ dṛśyate samyageva hi//
evaṃ madbhaktiyuktānāmātmā samyak prakāśate/
madbhakteḥ kāraṇaṃ kiñcidvakṣyāmi śṛṇu tattvataḥ//

Just like a person cannot see any sign or mark with his eyes in the darkness of night and can only see it in the light of the lamp, similarly only a person who has Bhakti in me (i.e. has sincere devotion and dedication in me, has firm conviction and faith in me, has surrendered his ego and pride and believes and implements what I say for his own welfare) can experience or witness the Atma. Now I shall tell you some practical methods for my Bhakti which would inculcate the various benefits accruing with having sincere devotion and dedication for me, by surrendering one's false ego and pride, and instead developing such virtues as humility, submission, faith, belief, worship of the Lord, following the path shown by him etc. Listen carefully (46-47)—

[Note :—Verse nos. 19-47 deal with metaphysics and essential teachings of Vedant. The following verses up to no. 55 deal with Bhakti or devotion and its importance. The concepts of Vedanta and Bhakti have been dealt with in appendix 2 at the end of this book also.]

मद्भक्तसङ्गो मत्सेवा मद्भक्तानां निरन्तरम्। एकादश्युपवासादि मम पर्वानुमोदनम्।। 48।।
मत्कथाश्रवणे पाठे व्याख्याने सर्वदा रतिः। मत्पूजापरिनिष्ठा च मम नामानुकीर्तनम्।।49।।

madbhaktasaṅgo matsevā madbhaktānāṃ nirantaraṃ/
ekādaśyupavāsādi mama parvānumodanam//
matkathāśravaṇe pāṭhe vyākhyāne sarvadā ratiḥ/
matpūjāparinisṭhā ca mama nāmānukīrtanam//

[These paths of Bhakti that can provide emancipation and salvation to the creature are the following—] (1) To have constant contact, communion and interaction with my other devotees; (2) to do constant service to me and my devotees; (3) to keep fasting on Ikadashi day (the eleventh day of both the waxing and waning phases of the moon) and other designated auspicious occasions; (4) to celebrate my various

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festivals (i.e. commemorating various holy occasions); (5) to have enduring interest and love for hearing, reading, reciting and explaining the various divine stories associated with me; (6) to be ever eager and diligent towards my worship, honour and adoration; (7) and to chant, recite and repeat my holy name in a group in chorus (i.e. to do 'Kirtan') (48-49).

[Note :—The 'constant serving of the Lord' implies constant following of the path shown by the Lord himself—which is righteousness, noble thought and ethical conduct, virtuousness and pursuance of the path prescribed by the scriptures. By 'constant service of my devotees' it is meant to follow the example of those who are themselves truthful, righteous, pious, virtuous and noble. By saying 'be vigilant or eager to worship me' also means to diligently follow my advice and endeavour for spiritual enlightenment and liberation, and it implies implementing both the above two ways simultaneously. Worship does not mean merely performing meaningless rituals before any image in a mechanical way without understanding what principles Ram stood for.

In the context of what has been said here, one should refer to Sri Ram's teaching to his mother Kaushalya in Uttar Kand, canto 7, verse no.59-82.]

एवं सततयुक्तानां भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी। मयि सञ्जायते नित्यं ततः किमवशिष्यते।। 50।।
अतो मद्भक्तियुक्तस्य ज्ञानं विज्ञानमेव च। वैराग्यं च भवेच्छीघ्रं ततो मुक्तिमवाप्नुयात्।। 51।।

evaṃ satatayuktānāṃ bhaktiravyabhicāriṇī /
mayi sañjāyate nityaṃ tataḥ kimavaśiṣyate //
ato madbhaktiyuktasya jñānaṃ vijñānameva ca /
vairāgyaṃ ca bhavecchīghraṃ tato muktimavāpnuyāt //

In this way, those who always follow me and heed my advice, are consistent and steady in the path shown and endorsed by me, they surely develop unwavering and steady devotion in me. What else is left to be done (to attain emancipation and salvation)? (50). Hence, it is certain that those persons who have (i.e. are endowed with) my truthful devotion (Bhakti) can soon get Gyan, Vigyan and Vairagya (and as a consequence of it, they soon achieve emancipation and salvation, which is the ultimate goal of the soul) (51).

[Note—Gyan and Agyan have been defined in verse no.38-39 above, while Vairagya refers to the renunciation of the illusionary world and detachment from falsehood that is automatically created once Gyan, accompanied with Vigyan, takes firm root in the heart and mind of a creature. This helps the creature to break free from the fetters that shackle it to this deluding world of endless troubles and miseries originating

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from ignorance of the truth. This ultimate realisation is tantamount to Mukti, which literally means freedom.]

कथितं सर्वमेतत्ते तव प्रश्नानुसारतः। अस्मिन्मनः समाधाय यस्तिष्ठेत्स तु मुक्तिभाक्।। 52।।
न वक्तव्यमिदं यत्नान्मद्भक्तिविमुखाय हि। मद्भक्ताय प्रदातव्यमाहूयापि प्रयत्नतः।। 53।।
य इदं तु पठेन्नित्यं श्रद्धाभक्तिसमन्वितः। अज्ञानपटलध्वान्तं विधूय परिमुच्यते।। 54।।

kathitaṃ sarvametatte tava praśnānusārataḥ/
asminmanaḥ samādhāya yastiṣṭhetsa tu muktibhāk//
na vaktavyamidaṃ yatnānmadbhaktivimukhāya hi/
madbhaktāya pradātavyamāhūyāpi prayatnataḥ//
ya idaṃ tu paṭhennityaṃ śraddhābhaktisamanvitaḥ/
ajñānapaṭaladhvāntaṃ vidhūya parimucyate//

In this manner, according to your query, I have told you everything about this secret path. That person, who concentrates his mind and focuses his intellect on these magnificent tenets of great import, becomes entitled and eligible to attain emancipation and salvation (52). Those who have no faith in me should not be explained anything that I have said (because they will deride it, cast doubts, make profane remarks and absurd comments, will mock, ridicule and demean it in their ignorance and delusions), while those who are my sincere devotees should purposefully and deliberately be explained and made to understand it (because it will benefit them and lead to their emancipation and salvation) (53). That person who will always read it with faith, conviction, belief and devotion, shall remove the shadow or veil of darkness cast by the cluster/hordes of all delusions and ignorance surrounding him, and he shall be freed or delivered from the shackles of this mundane, entrapping, deluding existence (54).

भक्तानां मम योगिनां सुविमलस्वान्तातिशान्तात्मनां
मत्सेवाभिरतात्मनां च विमलज्ञानात्मनां सर्वदा।
सङ्गं यः कुरुते सदोद्यतमतिस्तत्सेवनानन्यधी-
र्मोक्षस्तस्य करे स्थितोऽहमनिशं दृश्यो भवे नान्यथा।। 55।।

bhaktānāṃ mama yogināṃ suvimalasvāntātiśāntātmanāṃ
matsevābhiratātmanāṃ ca vimalajñānātmanāṃ sarvadā/
saṅgaṃ yaḥ kurute sadodyatamatistatsevanānanyadhī-
rmokṣastasya kare sthito'hamaniśaṃ dṛśyo bhave nānyathā//

That person who serves me with a focused mind, a pure heart,

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serenity and tranquility of soul, with a pure, uncorrupted wisdom and intellect, and at the same time have constant communion and interaction with Yogis (ascetics) who are my supreme and ardent devotees, is always eager to serve them with diligence, sincerity and faith—emancipation and salvation are under their hands (i.e. within their reach, easily available to them). I always keep myself subtly present in front of the vision of such a person. Except this, there is no other way to have my Darshan (divine viewing and communion) (55).

[Note :—Here again, as in verse nos. 48-49, the first sentence of verse no. 55 implies servicing the noble path of righteousness, equality, tolerance etc. as described in verse nos. 31-37. Bhakti and Moksha are also described by Sri Ram in Aranya Kand, Canto 10, verse nos. 20-44 which must be read in conjunction with this Canto 4, verse nos. 46-55. These concepts have been described in appendix no.2 of this book.]

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Aranya Kand — Canto 5

Demoness Supernakha's epsiode; Slaying of Khar, Dushan, Trishira etc.; Ravana's first response

श्रीमहादेव उवाव

तस्मिन् काले महारण्ये राक्षसी कामरूपिणी। विचचार महासत्त्वा जनस्थाननिवासिनी।।1।।
एकदा गौतमीतीरे पञ्चवट्याः समीपतः। पद्मवज्राङ्कुशाङ्कानि पदानि जगतीपतेः।।2।।
दृष्ट्वा कामपरीतात्मा पादसौन्दर्यमोहिता। पश्यन्ती सा शनैरायाद्राघवस्य निवेशनम्।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tasmin kāle mahāraṇye rākṣasī kāmarūpiṇī /
vicacāra mahāsattvā janasthānanivāsinī //
ekadā gautamītīre pañcavaṭyāḥ samīpataḥ /
padmavajrāṅkuśāṅkāni padāni jagatīpateḥ //
dṛṣṭvā kāmaparītātmā pādasaundaryamohitā /
paśyantī sā śanairāyādrāghavasya niveśanam //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! At that time, there used to roam about freely in that dense forest a demoness who was very strong and could assume any form she wished (1). Once, near the banks of the river Gautmi near Panchvati, she saw the glorious marks of the divine

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feet of Sri Ram on the ground, having the signs (linings) of lotus, Vajra and goad in them. She was enchanted by the sight of these footprints, and overcome by lust and passion, she followed those foot-prints, and slowly, surreptitiously reached his hermitage (2-3).

तत्र सा तं रमानाथं सीतया सह संस्थितम्। कन्दर्पसदृशं रामं दृष्ट्वा कामविमोहिता।। 4।।
राक्षसी राघवं प्राह कस्य त्वं कः किमाश्रमे। युक्तो जटावल्कलाद्यैः साध्यं किं तेऽत्र मे वद।।5।।

tatra sā taṃ ramānāthaṃ sītayā saha saṁsthitam /
kandarpasadṛśaṃ rāmaṃ dṛṣṭvā kāmavimohitā //
rākṣasī rāghavaṃ prāha kasya tvaṃ kaḥ kimāśrame /
yukto jaṭāvalkalādyaiḥ sādhyaṃ kiṃ te'tra me vada //

Reaching there, she saw Ramanath (the Lord of Rama or Laxmi, referring to Lord Vishnu in the form of Sri Ram), who was as beauteous and enchanting as Kamdeo-cupid, sitting alone with Sita. Being overcome by passion (4), she asked him, 'Whose (son or husband) are you? What is your name? Why do you stay in this forest attired in clothes made of birch (bark of tree) and have matted hairs etc. like a hermit? What do you wish to receive, gain or achieve by staying here? Tell me that (5).

अहं शूर्पणखा नाम राक्षसी कामरूपिणी। भगिनी राक्षसेन्द्रस्य रावणस्य महात्मनः।। 6।।
खरेण सहिता भ्रात्रा वसाम्यत्रैव कानने। राज्ञा दत्तं च मे सर्वं मुनिभक्षा वसाम्यहम्।।7।।
त्वां तु वेदितुमिच्छामि वद मे वदतां वर। तामाह रामनामाहमयोध्याधिपतेः सुतः।।8।।

ahaṃ śūrpaṇakhā nāma rākṣasī kāmarūpiṇī /
bhaginī rākṣasendrasya rāvaṇasya mahātmanaḥ //
khareṇa sahitā bhrātrā vasāmyatraiva kānane /
rājñā dattaṃ ca me sarvaṃ munibhakṣā vasāmyahaṃ //
tvāṃ tu veditumicchāmi vada me vadatāṃ vara /
tāmāha rāmanāmāhamayodhyādhipateḥ sutaḥ //

I am Supernakha, the sister of king of demons Ravana. I am a demoness who can assume any desired beautiful form (6). I stay with my brother Khar in this forest. The king (Ravana) has granted me the right over this whole forest. (Hence, as is my wont as a demoness) I eat hermits who live here (7). Oh the exalted orator! I want to know about you, so do tell me about yourself'. Then the Lord replied to her, 'I am the son of the king of Ayodhya, Dashrath, and my name is Ram (8).

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एषा मे सुन्दरी भार्या सीता जनकनन्दिनी। स तु भ्राता कनीयान्मे लक्ष्मणोऽतीव सुन्दरः।। 9।।
किं कृत्यं ते मया ब्रूहि कार्यं भुवनसुन्दरि। इति रामवचः श्रुत्वा कामार्ता साब्रवीदिदम्।। 10।।
एहि राम मया सार्धं रमस्व गिरिकानने। कामार्तांहं न शक्नोमि त्यक्तुं त्वां कमलेक्षणम्।। 11।।

eṣā me sundarī bhāryā sītā janakanandinī /
sa tu bhrātrā kanīyānme lakṣmaṇo'tīvasundaraḥ //
kiṃ kṛtyaṃ te mayā brūhi kāryaṃ bhuvanasundari /
iti rāmavacaḥ śrutvā kāmārtā sābravīdidam //
ehi rāma mayā sārdhaṃ ramasva girikānane /
kāmārtāhaṃ na śaknomi tyaktuṃ tvāṃ kamalekṣaṇam //

This beautiful lady is my wife called Sita, while that most handsome and charming youth is my younger brother Laxman (9). Oh Tribhuvan Sundari (i.e. one who is the most beautiful in the whole of the three worlds). Tell me what I can do for you?' Hearing these words of Sri Ram, Supernakha who was bitten by the lust-bug, wistfully said (10), 'Oh Sri Ram! Come to a mountain cave and enjoy yourself with me. At this time I am overcome with lust and passion, and am sexually excited. So I cannot leave (spare) you who are lotus-eyed' (11).

रामः सीतां कटाक्षेण पश्यन् सस्मितमब्रवीत्। भार्या ममैषा कल्याणी विद्यते ह्यनपायिनी।। 12।।
त्वं तु सापत्न्यदुःखेन कथं स्थास्यसि सुन्दरि। बहिरास्ते मम भ्राता लक्ष्मणोऽतीव सुन्दरः।। 13।।
तवानुरूपो भविता पतिस्तेनैव सञ्चर। इत्युक्ता लक्ष्मणं प्राह पतिर्मे भव सुन्दर।। 14।।
भ्रातुराज्ञां पुरस्कृत्य सङ्गच्छावोऽद्य माचिरम्। इत्याह राक्षसी घोरा लक्ष्मणं काममोहिता।। 15।।

rāmaḥ sītāṃ kaṭākṣeṇa paśyan sasmitamabravīt /
bhāryā mamaiṣā kalyāṇī vidyate hyanapāyinī //
tvaṃ tu sāpatnyaduḥkhena kathaṃ sthāsyasi sundari /
bahirāste mama bhrātā lakṣmaṇo'tīva sundaraḥ //
tavānurūpo bhavitā patistenaiva sañcara /
ityuktvā lakṣmaṇaṃ prāha patirme bhava sundara //
bhrāturājñāṃ puraskṛtya saṅgacchāvo'dya māciram /
ityāha rākṣasī ghorā lakṣmaṇaṃ kāmamohitā //

At this, Sri Ram indicated towards Sita with an askance glance and said, 'Oh the beautiful one! My wife is present here; abandoning her is impossible (12). While she is alive, how can you live your life burning in the jealousy of having a competitor (or a co-wife)? My most handsome younger brother Laxman is present outside the hermitage

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(13). He can be your worthy husband. You should roam and enjoy yourself with him (in the forests and mountains)'. When Sri Ram said this, the demoness Supernakha, who was very fierce and was overcome by passion and excited libido, approached Laxman lustfully and said, 'Oh the beautiful one! Obey your brother and become my husband. Let you and me move around together; don't delay (or think twice) in this' (14-15).

तामाह लक्ष्मणः साध्वि दासोऽहं तस्य धीमतः। दासी भविष्यसि त्वं तु ततो दुःखतरं नु किम्।। 16।।
तमेव गच्छ भद्रं ते स तु राजाखिलेश्वरः। तच्छ्रुत्वा पुनरप्यागाद्राघवं दुष्टमानसा।। 17।।
क्रोधाद्राम किमर्थं मां भ्रामयस्यनवस्थितः। इदानीमेव तां सीतां भक्षयामि तवाग्रतः।। 18।।

tāmāha lakṣmaṇaḥ sādhvi dāso'haṃ tasya dhīmataḥ /
dāsī bhaviṣyasi tvaṃ tu tato duḥkhataraṃ nu kim //
tameva gaccha bhadraṃ te sa tu rājākhileśvaraḥ /
tacchrutvā punarapyāgādrāghavaṃ duṣṭamānasā //
krodhādrāma kimarthaṃ māṃ bhrāmayasyanavasthitaḥ /
idānīmeva tāṃ sītāṃ bhakṣayāmi tavāgrataḥ //

He (Laxman) replied to her overtures, 'Oh earnest seeker! I am but a humble servant of the wise Sri Ram. By making me your husband, you too shall have to become his maid servant. What more sorrowful, humiliating and insulting can anything else be for you? (16). You be blessed! You should go to him, for he is our Lord'. Hearing this rebuff, that wicked demoness became very peeved and came back to Raghav (Sri Ram) (17). She said menacingly, 'Oh Sri Ram! You are fickle minded! Why do you make me run here and there? If Sita is a hurdle, then I shall eat her instantly right in front of you (to remove her from the path of our matrimony)' (18).

इत्युक्त्वा विकटाकारा जानकीमनुधावति। ततो रामाज्ञया खड्गमादाय परिगृह्य ताम्।। 19।।
चिच्छेद नासां कर्णौ च लक्ष्मणो लघुविक्रमः। ततो घोरध्वनिं कृत्वा रुधिराक्तवपुर्द्रुतम्।।20।।
क्रन्दमाना पपाताग्रे खरस्य परुषाक्षरा। किमेतदिति तामाह खरः खरतराक्षरः।।21।।
केनैवं कारितासि त्वं मृत्योर्वक्त्रानुवर्तिना। वद मे तं वधिष्यामि कालकल्पमपि क्षणात्।।22।।

ityuktvā vikaṭākārā jānakīmanudhāvati /
tato rāmājñayā khaḍgamādāya parigṛhya tām //
ciccheda nāsāṃ karṇau ca lakṣmaṇo laghuvikramaḥ /
tato ghoradhvaniṃ kṛtvā rudhirāktavapurdrutam //

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krandamānā papātāgre kharasya paruṣākṣarā /
kimetaditi tāmāha kharaḥ kharatarākṣaraḥ //
kenaivaṃ kāritāsi tvaṃ mṛtyorvaktrānuvartinā /
vada me taṃ vadhiṣyāmi kālakalpamapi kṣaṇāt //

Saying this, she assumed a ferocious form and lunged towards Sita. Then on the instructions of Sri Ram, Laxman swiftly caught hold of her, and using a sword (19), chopped off her nose and ears. Then, making a terrible noise and drenched in blood (20), she hurriedly went back and indignantly fell down in front of Khar (her brother), shrieking horribly as she fell. Seeing her horrifying condition, Khar said with an astonished shrill voice, 'What is the matter? (21). Oh, which rascal has dared to do this to you and wishes to go in the mouth (jaws) of death? Just tell me—even if he is as strong as Kaal (death), I shall kill him in a moment' (22).

तमाह राक्षसी रामः सीतालक्ष्मणसंयुतः। दण्डकं निर्भयं कुर्वन्नास्ते गोदावरीतटे॥ 23॥
मामेवं कृतवांस्तस्य भ्राता तेनैव चोदितः। यदि त्वं कुलजातोऽसि वीरोऽसि जहि तौ रिपू॥ 24॥
तयोस्तु रुधिरं पास्ये भक्षयैतौ सुदुर्मदौ। नो चेत्प्राणान्परित्यज्य यास्यामि यमसादनम्॥ 25॥

tamāha rākṣasī rāmaḥ sītālakṣmaṇasaṁyutaḥ /
daṇḍakaṃ nirbhayaṃ kurvannāste godāvarītaṭe //
māmevaṃ kṛtavāṁstasya bhrātā tenaiva coditaḥ /
yadi tvaṃ kulajāto'si vīro'si jahi tau ripū //
tayostu rudhiraṃ pāsye bhakṣayaitau sudurmadau /
no cetprāṇānparityajya yāsyāmi yamasādanam //

Then the demoness Supernakha reported to him, 'Sri Ram along with Sita and Laxman stays on the banks of river Godawari in order to make the Dandak forest fearless (23). At his instigation (or instance), his brother Laxman has made me in this horrible condition. If you have honour and dignity of your clan, and if you are brave and courageous, then you should kill those two enemies (and avenge my humiliation and insult) (24). You must eat those two who are wild and intoxicated as well as arrogant with their pride, strength and valour, while I shall drink their blood. Otherwise, I shall die (of shame) and go to hell' (25).

तच्छ्रुत्वा त्वरितं प्रागात्खरः क्रोधेन मूर्च्छितः। चतुर्दश सहस्राणि रक्षसां भीमकर्मणाम्॥ 26॥
चोदयामास रामस्य समीपं वधकाङ्क्षया। खरश्च त्रिशिराश्चैव दूषणश्चैव राक्षसः॥ 27॥
सर्वे रामं ययुः शीघ्रं नानाप्रहरणोद्यताः। श्रुत्वा कोलाहलं तेषां रामः सौमित्रिमब्रवीत्॥ 28॥

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tacchrutvā tvaritaṃ prāgātkharaḥ krodhena mūrcchitaḥ /
caturdaśa sahasrāṇi rakṣasāṃ bhīmakarmaṇām //
codayāmāsa rāmasya samīpaṃ vadhakāṅkṣayā /
kharaśca triśirāścaiva dūṣaṇaścaiva rākṣasaḥ //
sarve rāmaṃ yayuḥ śīghraṃ nānāpraharaṇodyatāḥ /
śrutvā kolāhalaṃ teṣāṃ rāmaḥ saumitrimabravīt //

Hearing these angry and distraught words of Supernakha, Khar was furious with anger and proceeded from there in haste. He sent a ferocious and terrible army of fourteen thousand demons (26) to kill Sri Ram. Khar, Dushan and Trishira (27) armed themselves with numerous weapons and reached the spot where Sri Ram was. Hearing the tumult caused by their arrival, Sri Ram said to Laxman (28)—

श्रूयते विपुलः शब्दो नूनमायान्ति राक्षसाः। भविष्यति महद्युद्धं नूनमद्य मया सह।। 29।।
सीतां नीत्वा गुहां गत्वा तत्र तिष्ठ महाबल। हन्तुमिच्छाम्यहं सर्वान् राक्षसान् घोररूपिणः।।30।।
अत्र किञ्चिन्न वक्तव्यं शापितोऽसि ममोपरि। तथेति सीतामादाय लक्ष्मणो गह्वरं ययौ।।31।।

śrūyate vipulaḥ śabdo nūnamāyānti rākṣasāḥ /
bhaviṣyati mahadyuddhaṃ nūnamadya mayā saha //
sītāṃ nītvā guhāṃ gatvā tatra tiṣṭha mahābala /
hantumicchāmyahaṃ sarvān rākṣasān ghorarūpiṇaḥ //
atra kiñcinna vaktavyaṃ śāpito'si mamopari /
tatheti sītāmādāya lakṣmaṇo gahvaraṃ yayau //

'There is a great noise outside. It appears certain that the demons are positively coming. It is obvious that there will be a fierce battle between them and me today (29). So, oh the most strong and valorous one, you should take Sita with you and go secure her inside some mountain cave (so that the demons don't see her and she is not terrified at the spectacle which is about to unfold here shortly). I wish to slay all these ferocious demons today (30). I tell you on oath, don't tell her anything on this subject'. Laxman obediently replied, 'As you please', and took Sita to a mountain cave (31).

रामः परिकरं बद्ध्वा धनुरादाय निष्ठुरम्। तूणीरावक्षयशरौ बद्ध्वायत्तोऽभवत्प्रभुः।।32।।
तत आगत्य रक्षांसि रामस्योपरि चिक्षिपुः। आयुधानि विचित्राणि पाषाणान्यादपानपि।।33।।
तानि चिच्छेद रामोऽपि लीलया तिलशः क्षणात्। ततो बाणसहस्त्रेण हत्वा तान् सर्वराक्षसान्।।34।।
खरं त्रिशिरसं चैव दूषणं चैव राक्षसम्। जघान प्रहरार्धेन सर्वानेव रघूत्तमः।।35।।

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rāmaḥ parikaraṃ bhaddhvā dhanurādāya niṣṭhuram /
tūṇīrāvakṣayaśarau baddhvāyatto'bhavatprabhuḥ //
tata āgatya rakṣāṁsi rāmasyopari cikṣipuḥ /
āyudhāni vicitrāṇi pāṣāṇānpādapānapi //
tāni ciccheda rāmo'pi līlayā tilaśaḥ kṣaṇāt /
tato bāṇasahasreṇa hatvā tān sarvarākṣasān //
kharaṃ triśirasaṃ caiva dūṣaṇaṃ caiva rākṣasam /
jaghāna praharārdhena sarvāneva raghūttamaḥ //

Then Sri Ram firmly tied his waist-cloth (i.e. readied himself), took the stern, merciless and formidably hard bow and two quivers full of imperishable and invincible arrows, and became ready for battle. [This bow and quivers were given to him by sage Agastya. See Canto 3, verse nos. 45-46.] (32). Then the demons came there and began to shower a torrent of various offensive weapons and armaments, as well as stones, boulders and trees upon Sri Ram (33). Sri Ram sliced and smashed those weapons into smithereens as if by magic. After having killed the entire demon army by shooting thousands of arrows (34), he also slayed Khar, Dushan and Trishira. In this manner, the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) slayed all those demons in 'half a Prahar', or literally in a short time of 1½ hours. [1 Prahar = 3 hours.] (35).

लक्ष्मणोऽपि गुहामध्यात्सीतामादाय राघवे। समर्प्य राक्षसान्दृष्ट्वा हतान्विस्मयमाययौ।। 36 ।।
सीता रामं समालिङ्ग्य प्रसन्नमुखपङ्कजा। शस्त्रव्रणानि चाङ्गेषु ममार्ज जनकात्मजा।।37 ।।

lakṣmaṇo'pi guhāmadhyātsītāmādāya rāghave /
samarpya rākṣasāndṛṣṭvā hatānvismayamāyayau //
sītā rāmaṃ samāliṅgya prasannamukhapaṅkajā /
śastravraṇāni cāṅgeṣu mamārja janakātmajā //

Then Laxman brought Sita out of the cave and handed her over to Sri Ram. At that time, he (Laxman) was very astonished on seeing all the dead demons strewn all around (36). Janak's daughter Sita embraced her husband with a most delighted face and moved her hands (affectionately and with divine healing powers) on the wounds inflicted on his body by the arms used by the demons to attack him (37).

सापि दुद्राव दृष्ट्वा तान्हतान् राक्षसपुङ्गवान्। लङ्कां गत्वा सभामध्ये क्रोशन्ती पादसन्निधौ।। 38 ।।
रावणस्य पपातोर्व्यां भगिनी तस्य रक्षसः। दृष्ट्वा तां रावणः प्राह भगिनीं भयविह्वलाम्।।39 ।।

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sāpi dudrāva dṛṣṭvā tānhatān rākṣasapuṅgavān /
laṅkāṃ gatvā sabhāmadhye krośantī pādasannidhau //
rāvaṇasya papātorvyāṃ bhaginī tasya rakṣasaḥ /
dṛṣṭvā tāṃ rāvaṇaḥ prāha bhaginīṃ bhayavihvalām //

Seeing all those demons, who were among the best in their clan, dead, Supernakha, the sister of demon king Ravana, rushed to Lanka and fell down on the ground at his feet, weeping and wailing indignantly. Seeing his sister so terrified and perplexed, Ravana enquired (38-39)—

उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ वत्से त्वं विरूपकरणं तव। कृतं शक्रेण वा भद्रे यमेन वरुणेन वा।।40।।
कुबेरेणाथवा ब्रूहि भस्मीकुर्यां क्षणेन तम्। राक्षसी तमुवाचेदं त्वं प्रमत्तो विमूढधीः।।41।।

uttiṣṭhottiṣṭha vatse tvaṃ virūpakaraṇaṃ tava /
kṛtaṃ śakreṇa vā bhadre yamena varuṇena vā //
kubereṇāthavā brūhi bhasmīkuryāṃ kṣaṇena tam /
rākṣasī tamuvācedaṃ tvaṃ pramatto vimūḍhadhīḥ //

'Oh daughter! Stand up. Do tell me who has dared to deform you? Oh gentle and honourable lady! Is this the work of Indra (king of Gods), or who among Yam (God of death), Varun (God of water) (40) or Kuber (God's treasurer) has done it? Tell me, I shall reduce him to ashes in a moment'. Then the demoness replied disdainfully, admonishing and rebuking him, 'You are very indulgent, lascivious, haughty and a foolish block-head (41).

पानासक्तः स्त्रीविजितः षण्ढः सर्वत्र लक्ष्यसे। चारचक्षुर्विहीनस्त्वं कथं राजा भविष्यसि।।42।।
खरश्च निहतः सङ्ख्ये दूषणस्त्रिशिरास्तथा। चतुर्दश सहस्राणि राक्षसानां महात्मनाम्।।43।।
निहतानि क्षणेनैव रामेणासुरशत्रुणा। जनस्थानमशेषेण मुनीनां निर्भयं कृतम्।
न जानासि विमूढस्त्वमत एव मयोच्यते।।44।।

pānāsaktaḥ strīvijitaḥ ṣaṇḍhaḥ sarvatra lakṣyase /
cāracakṣūrvihīnastvaṃ kathaṃ rājā bhaviṣyasi //
kharaśca nihataḥ saṅkhye dūṣaṇastriśirāstathā /
caturdaśa sahasrāṇi rākṣasānāṃ mahātmanām //
nihatāni kṣaṇenaiva rāmeṇāsuraśatruṇā /
janasthānamaśeṣeṇa munīnāṃ nirbhayaṃ kṛtam /
na jānāsi vimūḍhastvamata eva mayocyate //

You are an indulgent drunkard; you are infatuated with and

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dominated by a women (are a womaniser), and appear impotent in all matters. You do not have the so-called four eyes (two physical eyes of the body and two subtle eyes in the form of spies and informers)—then say, how (i.e. how long) can you remain a king? (42). Khar has been killed in the battle, while Dushan and Trishira along with fourteen thousand of the best of the demon army (43) have been killed by the one who is an enemy of demons, that is Sri Ram, in an instant. The whole inhabited area (of the forest) has been liberated from demons and made freely accessible and habitable for the hermits and sages by him. Inspite of such a havoc taking place in your realm, you are still unaware of it! That is why I say you are a total block-head and an idiot' (44).

रावण उवाच

को वा रामः किमर्थं वा कथं तेनासुरा हताः। सम्यक्कथय मे तेषां मूलघातं करोम्यहम्।।45।।

rāvaṇa uvāca

ko vā rāmaḥ kimarthaṃ vā kathaṃ tenāsurā hatāḥ/
samyakkathaya me teṣāṃ mūlaghātaṃ karomyaham//

Ravana was taken aback and he retorted at this rebuke, saying, 'Oh, tell me who that Ram is? Why and how has he killed those demons? Tell me everything in detail; I will pierce (spike, chop off, eliminate) the root cause of it all' (45).

शूर्पणखोवाच

जनस्थानादहं याता कदाचिद्गौतमीतटे। तत्र पञ्चवटी नाम पुरा मुनिजनाश्रया।।46।।
तत्राश्रमे मया दृष्टो रामो राजीवलोचनः। धनुर्बाणधरः श्रीमान् जटावल्कलमण्डितः।।47।।
कनीयाननुजस्तस्य लक्ष्मणोऽपि तथाविधः। तस्य भार्या विशालाक्षी रूपिणी श्रीरिवापरा।।48।।

śūrpaṇakhovāca

janasthānādahaṃ yātā kadācidgautamītaṭe/
tatra pañcavaṭī nāma purā munijanāśrayā//
tatrāśrame mayā dṛṣṭo rāmo rājīvalocanaḥ/
dhanurbāṇadharaḥ śrīmān jaṭāvalkalamaṇḍitaḥ//
kanīyānanujastasya lakṣmaṇo'pi tathāvidhaḥ/
tasya bhāryā viśālākṣī rūpiṇī śrīrivāparā//

Supernakha said indignantly, 'One day I was going from my usual habitat to the banks of river Gautmi where there is an ancient

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hermitage inhabited by hermits, ascetics and sages. The place is called Panchvati (46). In that hermitage I saw Sri Ram, the lotus-eyed one, who was adorned by matted hairs and attired in clothes made from bark of trees (birch), holding a bow and arrow. He is a treasury of beauty and charm (47). His younger brother is as beautiful, handsome, charming and attractive as Sri Ram, and his broad-eyed wife is also comparable to goddess Laxmi herself in beauty, majesty and charm (48).

देवगन्धर्वनागानां मनुष्याणां तथाविधा। न दृष्टा न श्रुता राजन्द्योतयन्ती वनं शुभा।। 49।।
आनेतुमहमुद्युक्ता तां भार्यार्थं तवानघ। लक्ष्मणो नाम तद्भ्राता चिच्छेद मम नासिकाम्।। 50।।
कर्णौ च नोदितस्तेन रामेण स महाबलः। ततोऽहमतिदुःखेन रुदती खरमन्वगाम्।। 51।।

devagandharvanāgānāṃ manuṣyāṇāṃ tathāvidhā /
na dṛṣṭā na śrutā rājandyotayantī vanaṃ śubhā //
ānetumahamudyuktā tāṃ bhāryārthaṃ tavānagha /
lakṣmaṇo nāma tadbhrātā ciccheda mama nāsikām //
karṇau ca noditastena rāmeṇa sa mahābalaḥ /
tato'hamatiduḥkhena rudatī kharamanvagām //

Oh king! Among the Gods, Gandharvas (celestial musicians), Naags (legendary serpents who rule the subterranean world and their daughters are regarded as one of the most beautiful creatures in creation), and humans etc.—a woman as bewitchingly beautiful and enchanting as that lady has never been ever heard of or seen anywhere amongst them. That auspicious and virtuous lady illuminates the whole forest by her divine beauty, radiance and glow (49). Oh Anagh (sinless, faultless, guiltless and pure one)! I had tried to bring her here to make her your wife, at which attempt of mine Sri Ram's brother Laxman had chopped off my nose (50). And then (not satisfied by that, and to add insult to injury), at the behest of Sri Ram, the most strong Laxman dismembered my ears also. Then I went away, gravely lamenting and weeping, to Khar (my brother) (51).

[Note:—It should be noted how lie and falsehood has been used by Supernakha to instigate and provoke Ravana. This, along with Manthara's instigation of Kaikeyi at Ayodhya, are but two outstanding examples of how misinformation or distortion of facts can subvert the mind of even the most wise persons and cause horrible consequences. The moral is to verify the facts first hand before jumping to conclusions, and more dangerously, to act upon these twisted, self-serving, spiced-up information.]

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सोऽपि रामं समासाद्य युद्धं राक्षसयूथपैः। अतः क्षणेन रामेण तेनैव बलशालिना।। 52।।
सर्वे तेन विनष्टा वै राक्षसा भीमविक्रमाः। यदि रामो मनः कुर्यात्त्रैलोक्यं निमिषार्धतः।।53।।
भस्मीकुर्यान्न सन्देह इति भाति मम प्रभो। यदि सा तव भार्या स्यात्सफलं तव जीवितम्।।54।।

so'pi rāmaṃ samāsādya yuddhaṃ rākṣasayūthapaiḥ /
ataḥ kṣaṇena rāmeṇa tenaiva balaśālinā //
sarve tena vinaṣṭā vai rākṣasā bhīmavikramāḥ /
yadi rāmo manaḥ kuryāttrailokyaṃ nimiṣārdhataḥ //
bhasmīkuryānna sandeha iti bhāti mama prabho /
yadi sā tava bhāryā syātsaphalaṃ tava jīvitam //

He (Khar) immediately went with his demon commanders (Dushan and Trishira) and took up battle with Sri Ram to settle scores with him, but that valiant one (52) destroyed the huge army of colossus, invincible and always victorious demons in a flash (i.e. in a short while). It appears to me that if Sri Ram firmly decides, he can turn the Triloki (the three worlds) (53) into ashes in a second. But, by the way, if his woman (Sita) becomes your wife, then your life will be deemed to be rewarded and you would be very fortunate (i.e. you will be very lucky to have Sita as your wife) (54).

अतो यतस्व राजेन्द्र यथा ते वल्लभा भवेत्। सीता राजीवपत्राक्षी सर्वलोकैकसुन्दरी।। 55।।
साक्षाद्रामस्य पुरतः स्थातुं त्वं न क्षमः प्रभो। मायया मोहयित्वा तु प्राप्स्यसे तां रघूत्तमम्।।56।।

ato yatasva rājendra yathā te vallabhā bhavet /
sītā rājīvapatrākṣī sarvalokaikasundarī //
sākṣādrāmasya puratah sthātuṃ tvaṃ na kṣamaḥ prabho /
māyayā mohayitvā tu prāpsyase tāṃ raghūttamam //

Hence, oh King of kings (Rajendra), make an effort so that Sita, who is lotus-eyed and the only beauty in the whole world, becomes dearest to your heart (i.e. your dear wife) (55). Oh Lord! You cannot stand physically in front of him (i.e. you cannot openly confront him, you are no match for Sri Ram's strength, and therefore you cannot hope to acquire Sita while he is around). So, in order to accomplish this task, you will have to adopt some deceitful and clever tact to divert his attention in order to get her (Sita)' (56).

श्रुत्वा तत्सूक्तवाक्यैश्च दानमानादिभिस्तथा। आश्वास्य भगिनीं राजा प्रविवेश स्वकं गृहम्।
तत्र चिन्तापरो भूत्वा निद्रां रात्रौ न लब्धवान्।। 57।।

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śrutvā tatsūktavākyaiśca dānamānādibhistathā /
āśvāsya bhaginīṃ rājā praviveśa svakaṃ gṛham /
tatra cintāparo bhūtvā nidrāṃ rātrau na labdhavān //

Hearing all this, the demon king Ravana honoured his sister (Supernakha) with pleasant, soothing and sweet words to reassure and console her, and also gave her ample largesse of gifts. Then he entered his royal palace, but he could not sleep that night due to worries and consternation (57).

एकेन रामेण कथं मनुष्यमात्रेण नष्टः सबलः खरो मे।
भ्राता कथं मे बलवीर्यदर्पयुतो विनष्टो बत राघवेण।। 58।।

ekena rāmeṇa kathaṃ manuṣyamātreṇa naṣṭaḥ sabalaḥ kharo me /
bhrātā kathaṃ me balavīryadarpayuto vinaṣṭo bata rāghaveṇa //

During the night he deeply pondered over the matter and debated to himself, 'It is very surprising and a strange occurrence that a lonely and ordinary human born in Raghu's clan, Sri Ram, can ever slay my brother Khar, who was endowed with immense strength, formidable courage and matchless bravery, along with his ace army (58).

यद्वा न रामो मनुजः परेशो मां हन्तुकामः सबलं बलौघैः।
सम्प्रार्थितोऽयं द्रुहिणेन पूर्वं मनुष्यरूपोऽद्य रघोः कुलेऽभूत्।। 59।।

yadvā na rāmo manujaḥ pareśo māṃ
hantukāmaḥ sabalaṃ balaughaiḥ /
samprārthito'yaṃ druhiṇena pūrvaṃ
manuṣyarūpo'dya raghoḥ kule'bhūt //

Or else it appears that he is the personification of Parmatma (supreme Soul, the Lord God) himself who has, on the prayers of Brahma in some previous time, incarnated/manifested himself in a human form in Raghu's clan to kill me along with my army using an army of monkeys for the purpose (59).

वध्यो यदि स्यां परमात्मनाहं वैकुण्ठराज्यं परिपालयेऽहम्।
नो चेदिदं राक्षसराज्यमेव भोक्ष्ये चिरं राममतो व्रजामि।। 60।।

vadhyo yadi syāṃ paramātmanāhaṃ
vaikuṇṭharājyaṃ paripālaye'ham /
no cedidaṃ rākṣasarājyameva
bhokṣye ciraṃ rāmamato vrajāmi //

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If I am indeed killed by Parmatma (supreme Lord) himself then surely enough I shall enjoy the kingdom of heaven, otherwise I will be enjoying the kingdom (or kinghood) of the demons for a long time to come. I stand to gain both the ways. Therefore, I will certainly go to (i.e. have a face-off with) Sri Ram' (60).

इत्थं विचिन्त्याखिलराक्षसेन्द्रो रामं विदित्वा परमेश्वरं हरिम्।
विरोधबुद्ध्यैव हरिं प्रयामि द्रुतं न भक्त्या भगवान् प्रसीदेत्।। 61।।

itthaṃ vicintyākhilarākṣasendro rāmaṃ viditvā parameśvaraṃ hariṃ/
virodhabuddhyaiva hariṃ prayāmi drutaṃ na bhaktyā bhagavān prasīdet//

Ravana, who was a king of the whole demon race, contemplated over the matter thus, and realising (coming to the conclusion) that Sri Ram was the real, true personification of Parmatma Sri Hari (Vishnu) himself, he decided that he will attain (go near) the Lord even with enmity, ill-will and maliciousness, because for him to do it (i.e. approach Sri Ram) with Bhakti and other noble pursuits such as righteousness, spiritualism and humility, is very difficult (because of his evil body and evil deeds), and the Lord cannot be easily pleased by him with the latter method of Bhakti (because he is so sinful that he is not fit to do it properly; it is not his cup of tea as it were) (61).

[Note :—See also Canto 7, verse no. 65 to show the respect with which he kept Sita. This proves that though outwardly Ravana had played his role as a ferocious tyrant and a ruthless, cruel, sinful and belligerent demon, internally he was at peace with himself, sure in the conviction that finally, his redemption, emancipation and salvation was at hand, and that too in a convenient manner befitting his mental temperament and tendencies as a demon. The deliverance for which mystics, ascetics, sages, hermits, seers and saints had to do so much austerities and penances was available to him virtually on a platter without the incumbent sufferings and hardships. Further, the Lord is attainable by honest and sincere confession, and not by deception, and Ravana wins the game hands down on this count. There are various episodes in which Ravana has made it clear that he is mentally well aware of who Ram actually is. All his acts were done willingly and purposefully to ensure that he does not let go of this golden opportunity to attain emancipation and salvation and get rid of the evil demon body.]

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Aranya Kand — Canto 6

Ravana approaches Marich

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

विचिन्त्यैवं निशायां स प्रभाते रथमास्थितः। रावणो मनसा कार्यमेकं निश्चित्य बुद्धिमान्।।1।।
ययौ मारीचसदनं परं पारमुदन्वतः। मारीचस्तत्र मुनिवज्जटावल्कलधारकः।।2।।
ध्यायन् हृदि परात्मानं निर्गुणं गुणभासकम्। समाधिविरमेऽपश्यद्रावणं गृहमागतम्।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

vicintyaivaṃ niśāyāṃ sa prabhāte rathamāsthitaḥ/
rāvaṇo manasā kāryamekaṃ niścitya buddhimān//
yayau mārīcasadanaṃ paraṃ pāramudanvataḥ/
mārīcastatra munivajjaṭāvalkaladhārakaḥ//
dhyāyan hṛdi parātmānaṃ nirguṇaṃ guṇabhāsakam/
samādhivirame'paśyadrāvaṇaṃ gṛhamāgatam//

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Making up his mind during the night, at the crack of dawn the next morning, the wise Ravana boarded a chariot, and having decided on a course of action (1), he went to the residence of Marich on the other shore of the ocean. There, Marich, attired like a hermit with matted lock of hairs and clothes made of birch (2), was contemplating in his heart on the 'Nirgun' God (i.e. the Lord who is without attributes, is formless, nameless and all-pervading) and experiencing the divine glow of his sublime and ethereal virtues in his heart. When he woke up from his contemplative and meditative posture, known as Samadhi (a trance like state when one is totally oblivious of the external world around him), he found Ravana standing in front of him in his dwelling (3).

[Note—The concept of Samadhi has been explained in appendix no. 2 of this book.]

द्रुतमुत्थाय चालिङ्ग्य पूजयित्वा यथाविधि। कृतातिथ्यं सुखासीनं मारीचो वाक्यमब्रवीत्।।4।।
समागमनमेतत्ते रथेनैकेन रावण। चिन्तापर इवाभासि हृदि कार्यं विचिन्तयन्।।5।।
ब्रूहि मे न हि गोप्यं चेत्करवाणि तव प्रियम्। न्याय्यं चेद् ब्रूहि राजेन्द्र वृजिनं मां स्पृशेन्न हि।।6।।

drutamutthāya cāliṅgya pūjayitvā yathāvidhi/
kṛtātithyaṃ sukhāsīnaṃ mārīco vākyamabravīt//
samāgamanametatte rathenaikena rāvaṇa/
cintāpara ivābhāsi hṛdi kāryaṃ vicintayan//

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brūhi me na hi gopyaṃ cetkaravāṇi tava priyam /
nyāyyaṃ cedbrūhi rājendra vṛjinaṃ māṃ spṛśenna hi //

When Marich saw Ravana, he hastily stood up, embraced him, duly welcomed and worshipped him in the traditional way as an honoured guest (by offering oblations, refreshments etc.), and when Ravana was comfortably seated, Marich asked (4), 'Oh Ravana! You have come with a single chariot (alone) and your mind appears to be deeply disturbed and worried on some subject (5). If it is not a secret (which you do not want to divulge to me, then) do tell me about it. Oh King of kings! If I do not have to commit a sin and if it is righteous, proper and in accordance with the law, then tell me, I shall surely do that work for you which is so dear to your heart and causing so much perplexity to you (i.e. the work which you want me to do, and for which purpose you have come here, I'll do it gladly.)' (6).

रावण उवाच

अस्ति राजा दशरथः साकेताधिपतिः किल। रामनामा सुतस्तस्य ज्येष्ठः सत्यपराक्रमः ।। 7 ।।
विवासयामास सुतं वनं वनजनप्रियम्। भार्यया सहितं भ्रात्रा लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितम् ।। 8 ।।
स आस्ते विपिने घोरे पञ्चवट्याश्रमे शुभे। तस्य भार्या विशालाक्षी सीता लोकविमोहिनी ।। 9 ।।

rāvaṇa uvāca

asti rājā daśarathaḥ sāketādhipatiḥ kila /
rāmanāmā sutastasya jyeṣṭhaḥ satyaparākramaḥ //
vivāsayāmāsa sutaṃ vanaṃ vanajanapriyam /
bhāryayā sahitaṃ bhrātrā lakṣmaṇena samanvitam //
sa āste vipine ghore pañcavaṭyāśrame śubhe /
tasya bhāryā viśālākṣī sītā lokavimohinī //

Ravana replied, 'It is said that king Dashrath is the ruler of Ayodhya, and his eldest son is the right-earnest and victorious one called Ram (7). Dashrath has sent that son, who is dear to the hermit and sages, to the forest along with his wife and younger brother Laxman (8). Presently, he stays in the Panchvati hermitage in the dense, wild forest called Dandakaranya. I've heard that his wife, the broad-eyed Sita, is able to charm and enthrall the whole of the three worlds (Lokas) by her bewitching beauty (9).

रामो निरपराधान्मे राक्षसान् भीमविक्रमान्। खरं च हत्वा विपिने सुखमास्तेऽतिनिर्भयः ।। 10 ।।
भगिन्याः शूर्पणखाया निर्दोषायाश्च नासिकाम्। कर्णौ चिच्छेद दुष्टात्मा वने तिष्ठति निर्भयः ।। 11 ।।

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rāmo niraparādhānme rākṣasān bhīmavikramān /
kharaṃ ca hatvā vipine sukhamāste'tinirbhayaḥ //
bhaginyāḥ śūrpaṇakhāyā nirdoṣāyāśca nāsikām /
karṇau ciccheda duṣṭātmā vane tiṣṭhati nirbhayaḥ //

That Ram has killed my most valiant, mighty and innocent demons, along with my brother Khar. He stays in that forest (where there are a lot of hardships and where sages and hermits do Tapa) happily and fearlessly (10). My sister Supernakha had also not committed any misconduct and was innocent (i.e. had not done any harm or caused any offence to him), but that rascal cut-off her nose and ears, and now fearlessly lives in that forest unchallenged (11).

[Note :—The reader must note how facts have been distorted. Ravana claims that Supernakha was not guilty of any misconduct—which is contrary to facts. But he is not to be blamed, for this was what he was told by her. He had no reason to disbelief his sister.]

अतस्त्वया सहायेन गत्वा तत्प्राणवल्लभाम्। आनयिष्यामि विपिने रहिते राघवेण ताम्।। 12।।
त्वं तु मायामृगो भूत्वा ह्याश्रमादपनेष्यसि। रामं च लक्ष्मणं चैव तदा सीतां हराम्यहम्।। 13।।

atastvayā sahāyena gatvā tatprāṇavallabhām /
ānayiṣyāmi vipine rahite rāghaveṇa tām //
tvaṃ tu māyāmṛgo bhūtvā hyāśramādapaneṣyasi /
rāmaṃ ca lakṣmaṇaṃ caiva tadā sītāṃ harāmyaham //

Hence, by your help, I intend to bring his dearest wife Sita when Sri Ram is not in that forest (as a token of reprisal and reiterating my superior authority in the dense jungle) (12). Towards this end, you should become a decoy deer and take Sri Ram and Laxman far away from the hermitage on some pretext. Just at that opportune time, I shall steal (kidnap) her (13).

त्वं तु तावत्सहायं मे कृत्वा स्थास्यसि पूर्ववत्। इत्येवं भाषमाणं तं रावणं वीक्ष्य विस्मितः।। 14।।
केनेदमुपदिष्टं ते मूलघातकरं वचः। स एव शत्रुर्वध्यश्च यस्त्वन्नाशं प्रतीक्षते।। 15।।

tvaṃ tu tāvatsahāyaṃ me kṛtvā sthāsyasi pūrvavat /
ityevaṃ bhāṣamāṇaṃ taṃ rāvaṇaṃ vīkṣya vismitaḥ //
kenedamupadiṣṭaṃ te mūlaghātakaraṃ vacaḥ /
sa eva śatrurvadhyaśca yastvannāśaṃ pratīkṣate //

In this manner, after helping me in my plan, you can come back to your residence here as before'. Hearing Ravana say this shocking thing,

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Marich was aghast and stunned with astonishment. He said (14), 'Oh Ravana! Who has told (advised) you this thing which is completely devastating and ruinous for you? Anyone who wants to destroy you in this manner (using this plan as a bait to lure you in the trap of self-destruction), surely he is your enemy and worthy of being killed (i.e. punished) (15).

रामस्य पौरुषं स्मृत्वा चित्तमद्यापि रावण। बालोऽपि मां कौशिकस्य यज्ञसंरक्षणाय सः ।। 16 ।।
आगतस्त्विषुणैकेन पातयामास सागरे। योजनानां शतं रामस्तदादि भयविह्वलः ।। 17 ।।
स्मृत्वा स्मृत्वा तदेवाहं रामं पश्यामि सर्वतः ।। 18 ।।

rāmasya pauruṣaṃ smṛtvā cittamadyāpi rāvaṇa /
bālo'pi māṃ kauśikasya yajñasaṁrakṣaṇāya saḥ //
āgatastviṣuṇaikena pātayāmāsa sāgare /
yojanānāṃ śataṃ rāmastadādi bhayavihvalaḥ //
smṛtvā smṛtvā tadevāhaṃ rāmaṃ paśyāmi sarvataḥ //

Oh Ravana! When I remember Sri Ram's valour during his adolescent days—when he had come to protect the fire sacrifice of sage Vishwamitra (16), and (when I had tried to interfere) he had thrown me (i.e. flung me) by a single arrow to a distance of one hundred Yojans (appx. 800 miles) on the shore of an ocean—ever since that time, I remain terrified of him (17). That incident keeps on recurring in my memory and haunting, and I imagine (visualise) Sri Ram everywhere (18).

[Note :—It appears that it is a case of traumatic hallucination! Marich was so afraid of the Lord that he saw his image everywhere at all times. The Lord is so merciful that he liberated him because he had been remembering him constantly, albeit out of fear. See verse no.22 below. Incidentally, this is also the reason why Ravana achieved deliverance, because he was also remembering the Lord out of animosity and hate. The subtle message here is that the remembrance of the Lord is always beneficial for the creature.

Both Marich and Kaikeyi deserve special mention in the story of Ramayan, for it was because of the dirty tricks played by them that the Lord could accomplish the formidable task for which he had to manifest himself in the first place—and that was to eliminate the evil forces from the earth and restore balance in favour of righteous and noble virtues. They sacrificed their good name in order to help the Lord's divine plans. Had Marich not helped Ravana steal Sita, the greater plan of the Lord of eliminating all the evil demons would not have borne fruits. Even as Kaikeyi took up the cudgels of helping in the Lord's work by forcing him

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to exile in the forest inspite of the eternal ignominy that she had to suffer for it, Marich too helped in the Lord's work by helping Ravana steal Sita, for otherwise the Lord wouldn't have found an excuse to go to the den of evil demons at Lanka and kill them all to rid the earth of their burden for good. If the Lord had wanted, he could have killed Ravana while he was in the process of implementing his plans of stealing Sita, but that would have left the other demons untouched, and the job half done. A true devotee is one who puts the Lord's wishes before anything else, and considers himself very fortunate that the Lord had to depend upon him to do all the dirty things for him. A loyal servant is one who never hesitates to do even the most abhorable thing if that pleases his Lord, for everyone would be ready and too eager to volunteer to go down in history for all the good reasons, but to be remembered for all the wrong reasons requires a lot of guts. On this count, both Kaikeyi and Marich win hands down.]

दण्डकेऽपि पुनरप्यहं वने पूर्ववैरमनुचिन्तयन् हृदि।
तीक्ष्णशृङ्गमृगरूपमेकदा मादृशैर्बहुभिरावृतोऽभ्ययाम्।। 19।।

daṇḍake'pi punarapyahaṃ vane pūrvavairamanucintayan hṛdi/
tīkṣṇa śṛṅgamṛgarūpamekadā mādṛśairbahubhirāvṛto'bhyayām//

One day, remembering my old enmity with him, I went to the Dandakaranya forest disguised as a deer with sharp horns and mixed myself with other such animals (to conceal my true identity) (19).

राघवं जनकजासमन्वितं लक्ष्मणेन सहितं त्वरान्वितः।
आगतोऽहमथ हन्तुमुद्यतो मां विलोक्य शरमेकमक्षिपत्।। 20।।

rāghavaṃ janakajāsamanvitaṃ lakṣmaṇena sahitaṃ tvarānvitaḥ/
āgato'hamatha hantumudyato māṃ vilokya śaramekamakṣipat//

When I hastily moved forward with the intention to kill Raghav (Sri Ram), along with the daughter of Janak (Sita) and Laxman, he had shot a single arrow at me when he saw me (20).

तेन विद्धहृदयोऽहमुद्भ्रमन् राक्षसेन्द्र पतितोऽस्मि सागरे।
तत्प्रभृत्यहमिदं समाश्रितः स्थानमूर्जितमिदं भयार्दितः।। 21।।

tena viddhahṛdayo'hamudbhraman rākṣasendra patito'smi sāgare/
tatprabhṛtyahamidaṃ samāśritaḥ sthānamūrjitamidaṃ bhayārditaḥ//

Oh king of demons! I was pierced by it and I spun in the sky before falling in the ocean. I am so scared and terrified since then that I live in this place which makes me feel fearless and comfortable (because it is secluded and far away in the ocean from where Sri Ram is) (21).

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राममेव सततं विभावये भीतभीत इव भोगराशितः।
राजरत्नरमणीरथादिकं श्रोत्रयोर्यदि गतं भयं भवेत्।। 22।।

rāmameva satataṃ vibhāvaye bhītabhīta iva bhogarāśitaḥ/
rājaratnaramaṇīrathādikaṃ śrotrayoryadi gataṃ bhayaṃ bhavet//

When the (Hindi) words starting with the letter 'Ra', such as Raaj—kingdom, Ratna—gems and jewels, Ramani—a lustful woman, and Rath—a chariot, fall in my ears, I get terribly scared (remembering Ram) so much so that I remain afraid of having anything to do with any such thing of comfort and pleasure starting with the letter 'Ra', and always keep on remembering 'Ram', though out of fear (22).

राम आगत इहेति शङ्कया बाह्यकार्यमपि सर्वमत्यजम्।
निद्रया परिवृतो यदा स्वपे राममेव मनसानुचिन्तयन्।। 23।।

rāma āgata iheti śaṅkayā bāhyakāryamapi sarvamatyajam/
nidrayā parivṛto yadā svape rāmameva manasānucintayan//

Scared stiff by the dreadful apprehension that Sri Ram might come here also, I have forsaken all outside work (and remain holed up inside my safe haven). When I sleep during the night, I keep on remembering Sri Ram (even in my dreams) (23).

स्वप्नदृष्टिगतराघवं तदा बोधितो विगतनिद्र आस्थितः।
तद्भवानपि विमुच्य चाग्रहं राघवं प्रति गृहं प्रयाहि भोः।। 24।।

svapnadṛṣṭigatarāghavaṃ tadā bodhito vigatanidra āsthitaḥ/
tadbhavānapi vimucya cāgrahaṃ rāghavaṃ prati gṛhaṃ prayāhi bhoḥ//

In this manner, when I see Raghav (Sri Ram) in my dreams and I wake up from my sleep, I am unable to forget him and shake off his constant memory. Hence, oh Ravana, you too should abandon your obsessive stubbornness regarding Sri Ram, and drop the matter here and go home (24).

रक्ष राक्षसकुलं चिरागतं तत्स्मृतौ सकलमेव नश्यति।
तव हितं वदतो मम भाषितं परिगृह्याण परात्मनि राघवे।।25।।
त्यज विरोधमतिं भज भक्तितः परमकारुणिको रघुनन्दनः।
अहमशेषमिदं मुनिवाक्यतोऽश्रृणवमादियुगे परमेश्वरः।।26।।
ब्रह्मणार्थित उवाच तं हरिः किं तवेप्सितमहं करवाणि तत्।
ब्रह्मणोक्तमरविन्दलोचन त्वं प्रयाहि भुवि मानुषं वपुः।
दशरथात्मजभावमञ्जसा जहि रिपुं दशकन्धरं हरे।।27।।

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rakṣa rākṣasakulaṃ cirāgataṃ tatsmṛtau sakalameva naśyati /
tava hitaṃ vadato mama bhāṣitaṃ parigṛhāṇa parātmani rāghave //
tyaja virodhamatiṃ bhaja bhaktitaḥ paramakāruṇiko raghunandanaḥ /
ahamaśeṣamidaṃ munivākyato'śṛṇavamādiyuge parameśvaraḥ //
brahmaṇārthita uvāca taṃ hariḥ kiṃ tavepsitamahaṃ karavāṇi tat /
brahmaṇoktamaravindalocana tvaṃprayāhi bhuvi mānuṣaṃ vapuḥ /
daśarathātmajabhāvamañjasā jahi ripuṃ daśakandharaṃ hare //

In this way you will be able to protect your ancient demon race from destruction. Everything is ruined by remembering him with enmity and malice (i.e. one should not think about the Lord with a sinful mind and with a wrong intention, for that is counter productive and ruinous). Pay heed to what I say for your own welfare and well-being. You must abandon your animosity and hate, your inimical and confrontational predisposition towards Raghav (Sri Ram) (25), and instead you should worship, honour and adore him with sincere devotion and dedication, because Raghunandan (Sri Ram) is very benovelent, merciful and compassionate. I have heard all these things from the mouth of sages and hermits that during the 'Satyug' (the 1st of the four Yug celestial cycle marked by predominance of goodness and righteousness; the golden age), the Parmeshwar (the supreme Lord) (26) Sri Hari (Vishnu) had asked Brahma, when the latter had prayed to the former, to tell him what his desire was and it shall be fulfilled. Then Brahma had replied, 'Oh the lotus-eyed one! Manifest yourself soon on the earth as a human being in the form of Dashrath's son Ram and slay Ravana who has become spiteful, rebellious and inimical to the Gods' (27).

अतो न मानुषो रामः साक्षान्नारायणोऽव्ययः। मायामानुषवेषेण वनं यातोऽतिनिर्भयः॥ 28॥
भूभारहरणार्थाय गच्छ तात गृहं सुखम्। श्रुत्वा मारीचवचनं रावणः प्रत्यभाषत॥ 29॥

ato na mānuṣo rāmaḥ sākṣānnārāyaṇo'vyayaḥ /
māyāmānuṣaveṣeṇa vanaṃ yāto'tinirbhayaḥ //
bhūbhāraharaṇārthāya gaccha tāta gṛhaṃ sukham /
śrutvā mārīcavacanaṃ rāvaṇaḥ pratyabhāṣata //

Hence, you must believe me, Sri Ram is not an ordinary human. He is the truthful personification of the infinite, eternal, indefinable, attributeless and imperishable supreme Lord Sri Narayan himself. He has assumed a human form to remove the burden of the earth, and has therefore come to the forest fearlessly (with this divine purpose in

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mind). Hence, oh dear! You should peacefully return to your comfortable home without any further doubting and dithering'. Hearing these words of sane advice given by Marich, Ravana became extremely peeved and exasperated (because Marich was throwing a spanner in the wheel of his plans, both of the temporal form of seeking retribution for his sister's humiliation, as well as of the spiritual form of grabbing the last chance of easily attaining liberation and deliverance from the evil demon body by getting killed at the hands of the supreme Lord). So he asserted (28-29)—

परमात्मा यदा रामः प्रार्थितो ब्रह्मणा किल। मां हन्तुं मानुषो भूत्वा यत्नादिह समागतः॥ 30॥
करिष्यत्यचिरादेव सत्यसङ्कल्प ईश्वरः। अतोऽहं यत्नतः सीतामानेष्याम्येव राघवात्॥ 31॥

paramātmā yadā rāmaḥ prārthito brahmaṇā kila /
māṃ hantuṃ mānuṣo bhūtvā yatnādiha samāgataḥ //
kariṣyatyacirādeva satyasaṅkalpa īśvaraḥ /
ato'haṃ yatnataḥ sītāmāneṣyāmyeva rāghavāt //

'If Parmatma (supreme Soul or Lord) has indeed himself come in the form of Sri Ram, assuming a human body on the express prayers of Brahma to kill me, then he is sure to do it soon because the Lord God is true to his words. Therefore, I will definitely make efforts to ensure that I bring Sita away from Raghav (Sri Ram) at all costs (because this is my only chance for emancipation and salvation, and like you I would also be serving the Lord by helping him to accomplish his work and fulfill his words of eliminating the evil demons, for though I am internally a realised soul and have got this unfortunate body due to some curse, the rest of the demons might not be as wise as I am, and being their king, it is my duty to ensure that the entire demon clan benefits from this golden opportunity) (30-31).

वधे प्राप्ते रणे वीर प्राप्स्यामि परमं पदम्। यद्वा रामं रणे हत्वा सीतां प्राप्स्यामि निर्भयः॥ 32॥
तदुत्तिष्ठ महाभाग विचित्रमृगरूपधृक्। रामं सलक्ष्मणं शीघ्रमाश्रमादतिदूरतः॥ 33॥
आक्रम्य गच्छ त्वं शीघ्रं सुखं तिष्ठ यथा पुरा। अतः परं चेद्यत्किञ्चिद्भाषसे मद्विभीषणम्॥ 34॥
हनिष्याम्यसिनानेन त्वामत्रैव न संशयः। मारीचस्तद्वचः श्रुत्वा स्वात्मन्येवान्वचिन्तयत्॥ 35॥

vadhe prāpte raṇe vīra prāpsyāmi paramaṃ padam /
yadvā rāmaṃ raṇe hatvā sītāṃ prāpsyāmi nirbhayaḥ //
taduttiṣṭha mahābhāga vicitramṛgarūpadhṛk /
rāmaṃ salakṣmaṇaṃ śīghramāśramādatidūrataḥ //

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ākramya gaccha tvaṃ śīghraṃ sukhaṃ tiṣṭha yathā purā /
ataḥ paraṃ cedyatkiñcidbhāṣase madvibhīṣaṇam //
haniṣyāmyasinānena tvāmatraiva na saṁśayaḥ /
mārīcastadvacaḥ śrutvā svātmanyevānvacintayat //

Oh the brave one (Marich)! If I am killed at his hands in battle, I shall attain the highest stature for my soul, called the 'Param Pad', and on the contrary, if I am able to kill (subdue and vanquish) Sri Ram in the battle field, I shall get Sita (as a reward and a war trophy) without any fear from any quarters or hindrance from anyone who might claim her and with whom I have to fight again or make a compromise in future (32). Hence, oh the most lucky and fortunate one! Get up, assume the form of a strange and mysterious deer, take Sri Ram and Laxman far away from the hermitage as quickly as possibly (33), and then you can soon return back to your hermitage and live happily as you have been doing now. If you try to scare me off by saying anything more and attempt to dissuade me (34), then be certain that I shall kill you here instantly with this sword'. Hearing his threatening words, Marich was filled with dread, and he thought to himself that he has very little choice (35)—

[Note :—This verse makes it appear that Ravana had his doubts about Sri Ram being the supreme Lord himself. It is not so, for he was simply trying to hide his awareness so as to preempt any one accusing him of fighting the Lord inspite of being a wise one and being aware that he is fighting the supreme One who is even his Lord and is present inside his bosom as his Atma. There is a subtle message here—and that is that when one has doubts and does not heed good advice of one's well wishers, one is destined to ruin. Ravana was no ordinary demon, for he was well versed in the scriptures and was a renowned performer of religious rituals. He didn't need the help of Brahmins to perform fire sacrifices, which he did himself to perfection, making him invincible.

Another pertinent point is that once he had made his resolve, he did not like any one preaching him or advising him. This is a quality needed in a good king and a military commander, though it has its own shortcomings, because such a man does not bother to pay heed even to sane and well considered advice, leading sometimes to horrendous consequences.]

यदि मां राघवो हन्यात्तदा मुक्तो भवार्णवात्। मां हन्याद्यदि चेद्दुष्टस्तदा मे निरयो ध्रुवम्॥36॥
इति निश्चित्य मरणं रामादुत्थाय वेगतः। अब्रवीद्रावणं राजन्करोम्याज्ञां तव प्रभो॥37॥

yadi māṃ rāghavo hanyāttadā mukto bhavārṇavāt /
māṃ hanyādyadi ceddusṭastadā me nirayo dhruvam //

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iti niścitya maraṇaṃ rāmādutthāya vegataḥ /
abravīdrāvaṇaṃ rājankaromyājñāṃ tava prabho //

'If I am killed at that hands of Raghav (Sri Ram, who is the supreme Lord), then I shall be able to cross this ocean-like deluding, mundane and ensnaring world (and attain emancipation and salvation). But if this wicked rascal kills me, then I shall have to fall in hell' (36). Deciding to get killed at the hands of Sri Ram as a matter of choice, he got up hastily and said to Ravana, 'Oh king! Oh Lord! I shall obey your orders' (37).

इत्युक्त्वा रथमास्थाय गतो रामाश्रमं प्रति। शुद्धजाम्बूनदप्रख्यो मृगोऽभूद्रौप्यबिन्दुकः ।। 38 ।।
रत्नशृङ्गो मणिखुरो नीलरत्नविलोचनः। विद्युत्प्रभो विमुग्धास्यो विचचार वनान्तरे ।। 39 ।।
रामाश्रमपदस्यान्ते सीतादृष्टिपथे चरन् ।। 40 ।।

ityuktvā rathamāsthāya gato rāmāśramaṃ prati /
śuddhajāmbūnadaprakhyo mṛgo'bhūdraupyabindukaḥ //
ratnaśṛṅgo maṇikhuro nīlaratnavilocanaḥ /
vidyutprabho vimugdhāsyo vicacāra vanāntare //
rāmāśramapadasyānte sītādṛṣṭipathe caran //

Saying this, he boarded the chariot (with Ravana) and came to Sri Ram's hermitage (at Panchvati). There, he assumed the form of a strange and beautiful deer with silvery spots on a pure golden skin (38). Its horns were gem-studded, the hooves were studded with jewels, and its eyes were like a blue sapphire. In this way, that mysterious and majestic deer with an electric-like dazzle and fascinating countenance began roaming (39) near the hermitage of Sri Ram, within the sight of Sita (40).

क्षणं च धावत्यवतिष्ठते क्षणं समीपमागत्य पुनर्भयावृतः।
एवं स मायामृगवेषरूपधृक् चचार सीतां परिमोहयन्खलः ।। 41 ।।

kṣaṇaṃ ca dhāvatyavatiṣṭhate kṣaṇaṃ samīpamāgatya punarbhayāvṛtaḥ /
evaṃ sa māyāmṛgaveṣarūpadhṛk cacāra sītāṃ parimohayankhalaḥ //

41. In one moment he pranced and bounced playfully, and in another he came and stood motionless, and again he ran away as if out of fear. In this manner, that imposter (Marich) assumed a deceitful form of a decoy deer and roamed about frolicking playfully, skipping, hopping and jumping, frantically trying to attract Sita's attention (41).

[Note :—Both Ravana and Marich knew very well that Sri Ram was not

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an ordinary prince as is very evident by verse nos. 30-36. So, it was a conscious decision on their part to create willful enmity with the Lord as a means of their liberation from the body of a demon and attain emancipation and salvation.]

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Aranya Kand — Canto 7

Slaying of Marich and Sita's abduction

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

अथ रामोऽपि तत्सर्वं ज्ञात्वा रावणचेष्टितम्। उवाच सीतामेकान्ते शृणु जानकि मे वचः ।।1।।
रावणो भिक्षुरूपेण आगमिष्यति तेऽन्तिकम्। त्वं तु छायां त्वदाकारां स्थापयित्वोटजे विश ।।2।।
अग्नावदृश्यरूपेण वर्षं तिष्ठ ममाज्ञया। रावणस्य वधान्ते मां पूर्ववत्प्राप्स्यसे शुभे ।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

atha rāmo'pi tatsarvaṃ jñātvā rāvaṇaceṣṭitam /
uvāca sītāmekānte śṛṇu jānaki me vacaḥ //
rāvaṇo bhikṣurūpeṇa āgamiṣyati te'ntikam /
tvaṃ tu chāyāṃ tvadākārāṃ sthāpayitvoṭaje viśa //
agnāvadṛśyarūpeṇa varṣaṃ tiṣṭha mamājñayā /
rāvaṇasya vadhānte māṃ pūrvavatprāpsyase śubhe //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Here meanwhile, becoming aware of all the conspiracies hatched by Ravana, Sri Ram advised Sita when they were alone, 'Oh Sita! Listen to what I have to tell you (1). Oh the auspicious one! Ravana will come to you disguised as a mendicant. Hence, by my orders, you must enter the holy fire leaving behind your look-alike shadow in this hut, and stay there in the fire in an invisible form for one year. After that, after the killing of Ravana, you shall get back to me once again' (2-3).

[Note :—This establishes that the period of Sita's separation from Sri Ram was for one year. Further, it was she, in an invisible, intangible form, in her capacity as the all-powerful, dynamic, all-engulfing infinite energy residing inherently in the fire that, when ignited by Hanuman at Lanka, was responsible for the devastation of the city.]

श्रुत्वा रामोदितं वाक्यं सापि तत्र तथाकरोत्। मायासीतां बहिः स्थाप्य स्वयमन्तर्दधेऽनले ।।4।।
मायासीता तदापश्यन्मृगं मायाविनिर्मितम्। हसन्ती राममभ्येत्य प्रोवाच विनयान्विता ।।5।।

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पश्य राम मृगं चित्रं कानकं रत्नभूषितम्। विचित्रबिन्दुभिर्युक्तं चरन्तमकुतोभयम्।
बद्ध्वा देहि मम क्रीडामृगो भवतु सुन्दरः।।6।।

śrutvā rāmoditaṃ vākyaṃ sāpi tatra tathākarot /
māyāsītāṃ bahiḥ sthāpya svayamantardadhe'nale //
māyāsītā tadāpaśyanmṛgaṃ māyāvinirmitam /
hasantī rāmamabhyetya provāca vinayānvitā //
paśya rāma mṛgaṃ citraṃ kānakaṃ ratnabhūṣitam /
vicitrabindubhiryuktaṃ carantamakutobhayam /
baddhvā dehi mama krīḍāmṛgo bhavatu sundaraḥ //

Hearing these words of Sri Ram, Sita did as she was told. She became invisible in fire, leaving behind a shadowy Sita (4). Then that 'Maya-Sita' (illusionary Sita) saw (and was attracted to) that 'Maya-deer' (illusionary deer), came to Sri Ram and smilingly, politely said to him (5), 'Oh Sri Ram! Look at this golden deer which is adorned by gems and jewels. Ah! What marvelous spots are there on his body and how fearlessly it is wandering and frolicking around here! Oh Lord! Tie it and bring it to me; let it by my playmate' (6).

[Note :—(i) Not until the time the 'Maya-Sita'—the form of Sita that was deluding and not real, that cast a veil of ignorance about its truthful form—had made her appearance, the deer could succeed in its attempts to attract the 'original Sita'. The lesson drawn is that 'Maya attracts Maya'. If we are free from Maya, this deluding, imaginary and artificial world will automatically lose its charm and sheen for us. But if we allow ourselves to be fooled, then it is useless to accuse the world of fooling us. (ii) Sita had *not* asked Sri Ram to kill the deer as is widely believed, but only asked him to bring it alive to act as her companion in the forest to pass some time with it as a playful pet.]

तथेति धनुरादाय गच्छन् लक्ष्मणमब्रवीत्। रक्ष त्वमतियत्नेन सीतां मत्प्राणवल्लभाम्।। 7।।
मायिनः सन्ति विपिने राक्षसा घोरदर्शनाः। अतोऽत्रावहितः साध्वीं रक्ष सीतामनिन्दिताम्।।8।।
लक्ष्मणो राममाहेदं देवायं मृगरूपधृक्। मारीचोऽत्र न सन्देह एवंभूतो मृगः कुतः।। 9।।

tatheti dhanurādāya gacchan lakṣmaṇamabravīt /
rakṣa tvamatiyatnena sītāṃ matprāṇavallabhām //
māyinaḥ santi vipine rākṣasā ghoradarśanāḥ /
ato'trāvahitaḥ sādhvīṃ rakṣa sītāmaninditām //
lakṣmaṇo rāmamāhedaṃ devāyaṃ mṛgarūpadhṛk /
mārīco'tra na sandeha evaṁbhūto mṛgaḥ kutaḥ //

Then he (Sri Ram) said 'alright', picked up his bow and said to

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Laxman while departing, 'Oh Laxman! You must make all efforts to protect my dearest Sita (7). Most ferocious, illusive and deceptive demons are roaming in the wild forest. Hence, you should be very alert and careful in protecting the faultless and holy Sita' (8). Then Laxman replied to Sri Ram, 'Oh Lord! This is Marich in the disguise of a deer; there is no doubt about it because where is there such a strange deer in the entire existence?' (9).

[Note :—Laxman was aware that this is ploy by Marich because he has had the experience of him trying to kill them previously in the form of a deer—see Canto 6, verse nos. 19-21.]

श्रीराम उवाच

यदि मारीच एवायं तदा हन्मि न संशयः। मृगश्चेदानयिष्यामि सीताविश्रमहेतवे।। 10।।
गमिष्यामि मृगं बद्ध्वा ह्यानयिष्यामि सत्वरः। त्वं प्रयत्नेन सन्तिष्ठ सीतासंरक्षणोद्यतः।।11।।

śrīrāma uvāca

yadi mārīca evāyaṃ tadā hanmi na saṁśayaḥ/
mṛgaśvedānayiṣyāmi sītāviśramahetave//
gamiṣyāmi mṛgaṃ baddhvā hyānayiṣyāmi satvaraḥ/
tvaṃ prayatnena santiṣṭha sītāsaṁrakṣaṇodyataḥ//

Sri Ram replied, 'If he is Marich, then there is no doubt that I shall kill him. And if he is an ordinary deer, I shall bring him to please Sita (10). I shall swiftly go and soon tie this deer and bring it here. Meanwhile, you should be alert, keep a vigilant eye and protect Sita' (11).

[Note—This is reminiscent of Ravana's doubts expressed in Canto no 6, verse no.32 above. One can expect Ravana to have doubts, but to learn that the all-knowing omniscient Lord also has doubts seems incongruous on the face of it. But the Lord has other plans, and the subtle message which he wants to convey here is that if he can be deluded when in contact with Maya, what can be expected of ordinary creatures! So one should be wary of Maya in all its forms. The Sita to whom Sri Ram was talking now was not the real Sita, but her illusionary form created by using the deception-creating powers of the Lord. It would have been futile to tell the truth when the magician has already cast his hypnotic spell on the audience, as it was.]

इत्युक्त्वा प्रययौ रामो मायामृगमनुद्रुतः। माया यदाश्रया लोकमोहिनी जगदाकृतिः।। 12।।
निर्विकारश्चिदात्मापि पूर्णोऽपि मृगमन्वगात्। भक्तानुकम्पी भगवानिति सत्यं वचो हरिः।।13।।

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ityuktvā prayayau rāmo māyāmṛgamanudrutaḥ /
māyā yathāśrayā lokamohinī jagadākṛtiḥ //
nirvikāraścidātmāpi pūrṇo'pi mṛgamanvagāt /
bhaktānukampī bhagavāniti satyaṃ vaco hariḥ //

[What a wonder that—] The Maya which embodies (or symbolises) the deluding power of the Lord that enchants, enthralls and captivates the whole world by its mysterious, fascinating, maverick and powerful spell, and which is itself dependent on, or subordinate and subservient to the supreme and transcendental Lord— that same Lord in the person of Sri Ram ran behind pursuing a 'Maya-deer' (i.e. a deer which was as deceptive and illusionary as the Maya which has created it) (12). Inspite of being the supreme Lord who is faultless, eternal, with no encumbrances, all-pervading, omnipresent, omniscient, self sufficient and complete pure conscious Soul that is blissful—he rushed behind that deer. This goes to prove the truth of the statement that 'Lord Hari is very dear, merciful, compassionate, munificent and benevolent to his devotees (because he will go to any lengths to please them, suffering in the process himself)' (13).

[Note :—How would the Lord suffer to please his devotees? It was the desire of Marich to get killed at the hands of Sri Ram, it was the wish of Ravana that Marich should take Sri Ram far away from the dwelling so that he can abduct Sita, and it was the wish of Sita to have the animal, inspite of Laxman warning him that he is willingly allowing himself to be fooled. Despite the fact that Sri Ram knew that he will have to suffer a lot of hardship due to this single incident, he had allowed it to happen. That is why he is called a 'Bhaktanukampi' or one who is very magnanimous and kind towards one's devotees and followers, one who loves them more than even himself. See Canto 6, verse nos. 36-37 also.]

कर्तुं सीताप्रियार्थाय जानन्नपि मृगं ययौ। अन्यथा पूर्णकामस्य रामस्य विदितात्मनः ।। 14 ।।
मृगेण वा स्त्रिया वापि किं कार्यं परमात्मनः। कदाचिद्दृश्यतेऽभ्याशे क्षणं धावति लीयते ।। 15 ।।

kartuṃ sītāpriyārthāya jānannapi mṛgaṃ yayau /
anyathā pūrṇakāmasya rāmasya viditātmanaḥ //
mṛgeṇa vā striyā vāpi kiṃ kāryaṃ paramātmanaḥ /
kadāciddṛśyate'bhyāśe kṣaṇaṃ dhāvati līyate //

He knew everything; inspite of that he went behind the deer pursuing it just in order to please Sita (refer verse 6 above). Otherwise, what had Sri Ram—who is fully contented, self satisfied and without any wants or desires, who is enlightened, self-realised and most wise

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(14)—had to do with a deer or a woman. That deceptive deer appeared to be near one moment, and went far away and disappeared in the next (15).

दृश्यते च ततो दुरादेवं राममपाहरत्। ततो रामोऽपि विज्ञाय राक्षसोऽयमिति स्फुटम्।। 16।।
विव्याध शरमादाय राक्षसं मृगरूपिणम्। पपात रुधिराक्तास्यो मारीचः पूर्वरूपधृक्।। 17।।
हा हतोऽस्मि महाबाहो त्राहि लक्ष्मण मां द्रुतम्। इत्युक्त्वा रामवद्वाचा पपात रुधिराशनः।। 18।।

dṛśyate ca tato dūrādevaṃ rāmamapāharat /
tato rāmo'pi vijñāya rākṣaso'yamiti sphuṭam //
vivyādha śaramādāya rākṣasaṃ mṛgarūpiṇam /
papāta rudhirāktāsyo mārīcaḥ pūrvarūpadhṛk //
hā hato'smi mahābāho trāhi lakṣmaṇa māṃ drutam /
ityuktvā rāmavadvācā papāta rudhirāśanaḥ //

It reappeared again at a great distance. In this manner, appearing and disappearing repeatedly, and playing the game of hide and seek with the Lord, he took Sri Ram very far away. Then being certain that this is a demon, and not an ordinary deer (16), Sri Ram pierced (shot) him with a single arrow.

Immediately on being shot, Marich fell on the ground and reverted back to his original form of a demon, with blood spilling out from his mouth (17). That blood drinking demon (an ogre, a vampire) fell to the ground, crying aloud in the voice mimicking that of Sri Ram—'Oh the valorous Laxman! I am killed (i.e. am in danger). Save me immediately' (18).

यन्नामाज्ञोऽपि मरणे स्मृत्वा तत्साम्यमाप्नुयात्। किमुताग्रे हरिं पश्यंस्तेनैव निहतोऽसुरः।। 19।।
तद्देहादुत्थितं तेजः सर्वलोकस्य पश्यतः। राममेवाविशद्देवा विस्मयं परमं ययुः।। 20।।

yannāmājño'pi maraṇe smṛtvā tatsāmyamāpnuyāt /
kimutāgre hariṃ paśyaṁstenaiva nihato'surah //
taddehādutthitaṃ tejaḥ sarvalokasya paśyataḥ /
rāmamevāviśaddevā vismayaṃ paramaṃ yayuḥ //

Even the ignorant ones who remember him (the Lord, Sri Ram) at the time of death become one with him (i.e. they merge their soul with the supreme Soul of the Lord, which is called attainment of emancipation and salvation), to die at the hands of 'that' Hari even while personally looking at him and having him within sight before closing the eyes for good—what to say of the good luck and

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magnificent fortunes of such a demon! [How fortunate and privileged he was, how redeemed his soul was!] (19).

The effulgence of his soul (representing the luminous, truthful and pure conscious element present in the body as his Atma) emerged from his physical body and instantly entered Sri Ram. The Gods were very astonished and bewildered at this mysterious and astounding spectacle (20).

[Note :—Indeed they were! It's such an irony that demons such as Marich, Ravana and Kumbhakarna had their souls merging into Sri Ram at the end of their lives, while sages, seers, hermits and mystics on this earth and their exalted counterparts the Gods in heavens never had this privilege. Mere boast of spirituality and holiness will not please the Lord. Even lowly low-caste Shabari and the vulture Jatau had their share of salvation, but those who considered themselves as the exalted and holy ones, except a few such as Sutikshan, just remained satisfied in what they were. Its such an irony that those who were regarded as sinful and wicked and pervert to the extreme found the rest of their souls in the designated supreme resting place for the soul, and those who regarded it as their birth right and demand were robbed of it even without their realising the difference!]

किं कर्म कृत्वा किं प्राप्तः पातकी मुनिहिंसकः। अथवा राघवस्यायं महिमा नात्र संशयः।। 21।।
रामबाणेन संविद्धः पूर्वं राममनुस्मरन्। भयात्सर्वं परित्यज्य गृहवित्तादिकं च यत्।। 22।।

kiṃ karma kṛtvā kiṃ prāptaḥ pātakī munihiṁsakaḥ /
athavā rāghavasyāyaṃ mahimā nātra saṁśayaḥ //
rāmabāṇena saṁviddhaḥ pūrvaṃ rāmamanusmaran /
bhayātsarvaṃ parityajya gṛhavittādikaṃ ca yat //

They (the Gods) said, 'This cruel demon who was a killer of sages, seers, ascetics and hermits, had done so many sinful, evil and unrighteous deeds, and inspite of it he has attained such an auspicious end! Without doubt it is due to the greatness and enormity of Lord Raghav's benevolence, benediction, grace and munificence as well as his profound and majestic glory. Having been shot (pierced) by Sri Ram's arrows on two previous occasions, he had already forsaken his household and wealth, albeit out of fear, and was always engrossed (constantly involved) in remembering Sri Ram (21-22).

हृदि रामं सदा ध्यात्वा निर्धूताशेषकल्मषः। अन्ते रामेण निहतः पश्यन् राममवाप सः।। 23।।
द्विजो वा राक्षसो वापि पापी वा धार्मिकोऽपि वा। त्यजन्कलेवरं रामं स्मृत्वा याति परं पदम्।।24।।

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hṛdi rāmaṃ sadā dhyātvā nirdhūtāśeṣakalmaṣaḥ /
ante rāmeṇa nihataḥ paśyan rāmamavāpa saḥ //
dvijo vā rākṣaso vāpi pāpī vā dhārmiko'pi vā /
tyajankalevaraṃ rāmaṃ smṛtvā yāti paraṃ padam //

By the beneficial effects of constantly remembering Sri Ram in his heart (albeit out of fear and animosity), all his sins, his numerous misdemeanors and unrighteousness were destroyed, while at the end (i.e. at the time of his death) he died looking at the Lord and was killed by his hands. This is why he has attained Sri Ram (i.e. the supreme Lord) himself (23). Those who leave their bodies (die) remembering Sri Ram—whether they are Brahmins or demons, whether they are sinful or righteous—they are sure to attain the supreme stature of being one with the Lord himself, a stature called 'Param Pad' which is another name for the ultimate emancipation and salvation' (24).

[Note :—Verse nos. 21-24 mark the praise of Gods for Marich. To their credit, they acknowledged that Marich had indeed become sinless by remembering Sri Ram. No wonder in that—all those who come in contact with the Lord do become sinless. But how many of them 'merged' in him? Even sage Sarbhang died looking at Sri Ram, but he went to heaven and did not merge his soul in the Lord, although he was standing in front of the former. See Canto 2, verse nos. 11-12 of Aranya Kand.]

इति तेऽन्योन्यमाभाष्य ततो देवा दिवं ययुः । रामस्तच्चिन्तयामास म्रियमाणोऽसुराधमः ।। 25 ।।
हा लक्ष्मणेति मद्वाक्यमनुकुर्वन्ममार किम् । श्रुत्वा मद्वाक्यसदृशं वाक्यं सीतापि किं भवेत् ।।26 ।।

iti te'nyonyamābhāṣya tato devā divaṃ yayuḥ /
rāmastaccintayāmāsa mriyamāṇo'surādhamaḥ //
hā lakṣmaṇeti madvākyamanukurvanmamāra kim /
śrutvā madvākyasadṛśaṃ vākyaṃ sītāpi kiṃ bhavet //

Saying this to each other, the Gods went to the heaven.

Then Sri Ram began to wonder—why has this lowly demon died calling out 'Oh Laxman' in my voice? What will happen to Sita when she hears a voice like that of mine (mimicking me) calling in distress for help? (25-26).

इति चिन्तापरीतात्मा रामो दूरान्यवर्तत । सीता तद्भाषितं श्रुत्वा मारीचस्य दुरात्मनः ।। 27 ।।
भीतातिदुःखसंविग्ना लक्ष्मणं त्विदमब्रवीत् । गच्छ लक्ष्मण वेगेन भ्राता तेऽसुरपीडितः ।।28 ।।

iti cintāparītātmā rāmo dūrānnyavartata /
sītā tadbhāṣitaṃ śrutvā mārīcasya durātmanaḥ //

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bhītātiduḥkhasaṁvignā lakṣmaṇaṃ tvidamabravīt /
gaccha lakṣmaṇa vegena bhrātā te'surapīḍitaḥ //

Worrying in this way, Sri Ram started on his way back to his hermitage from a great distance. Here, Sita heard the voice of evil Marich mimicking Sri Ram (27), and becoming greatly afraid and worried about Sri Ram's welfare. Being overcome by mental agitations and anxiety, she said to Laxman, 'Oh Laxman! You must go immediately; your brother is in danger and is being tormented by demons (28).

हा लक्ष्मणेति वचनं भ्रातुस्ते न शृणोषि किम्। तामाह लक्ष्मणो देवि रामवाक्यं न तद्भवेत्।। 29।।
यः कश्चिद्राक्षसो देवि म्रियमाणोऽब्रवीद्वचः। रामस्त्रैलोक्यमपि यः क्रुद्धो नाशयति क्षणात्।।30।।
स कथं दीनवचनं भाषतेऽमरपूजितः। क्रुद्धा लक्ष्मणमालोक्य सीता वाष्पविलोचना।।31।।
प्राह लक्ष्मण दुर्बुद्धे भ्रातुर्व्यसनमिच्छसि। प्रेषितो भरतेनैव रामनाशाभिकाङ्क्षिणा।। 32।।

hā lakṣmaṇeti vacanaṃ bhrātuste na śṛṇoṣi kim /
tāmāha lakṣmaṇo devi rāmavākyaṃ na tadbhavet //
yaḥ kaścidrākṣaso devi mriyamāṇo'bravīdvacaḥ /
rāmastrailokyamapi yaḥ kruddho nāśayati kṣaṇāt //
sa kathaṃ dīnavacanaṃ bhāṣate'marapūjitaḥ /
kruddhā lakṣmaṇamālokya sītā vāṣpavilocanā //
prāha lakṣmaṇa durbuddhe bhrāturvyasanamicchasi /
preṣito bharatenaiva rāmanāśābhikāṅkṣiṇā //

Don't you hear your brother's voice calling out 'Oh Laxman'?'

Laxman replied, 'Oh goddess! These words are not of Sri Ram (29). Some demon has said them while dying. Sri Ram—who can destroy the Triloki (the whole of the three worlds—subterranean, terrestrial, celestial) in an instant if he gets angry (30)—how can that (supreme, all powerful, almighty) Lord speak in such miserable, pitiful and distressed words indicative of fear and scare?'

Then Sita became angry and admonished Laxman, saying with tearful eyes (31), 'Oh Laxman! Do you want to see your brother in trouble? Oh you evil minded one! It looks like Bharat—who wants the destruction of Sri Ram—has sent you (privately, surreptitiously, with some malefic intentions) (32).

मां नेतुमागतोऽसि त्वं रामनाश उपस्थिते। न प्राप्स्यसे त्वं मामद्य पश्य प्राणांस्त्यजाम्यहम्।। 33।।
न जानातीदृशं रामस्त्वां भार्याहरणोद्यतम्। रामादन्यं न स्पृशामि त्वां वा भरतमेव वा।।34।।

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māṃ netumāgato'si tvaṃ rāmanāśa upasthite /
na prāpsyase tvaṃ māmadya paśya prāṇāṁstyajāmyaham //
na jānātīdṛśaṃ rāmastvāṃ bhāryāharaṇodyatam /
rāmādanyaṃ na spṛśāmi tvāṃ vā bharatameva vā //

Have you come to take me away after Sri Ram is eliminated (killed)? But you shall not get hold of me. Look, I shall die now (33). Sri Ram does not know that you are eager to kidnap (usurp and misappropriate) his wife. I cannot touch either you or Bharat or anyone else in this world except Sri Ram' (34).

इत्युक्त्वा बध्यमाना सा स्वबाहुभ्यां रुरोद ह। तच्छ्रुत्वा लक्ष्मणः कर्णौ पिधायातीव दुःखितः ।। 35 ।।
मामेवं भाषसे चण्डि धिक्त्वां नाशमुपैष्यसि। इत्युक्त्वा वनदेवीभ्यः समर्प्य जनकात्मजाम् ।। 36 ।।
ययौ दुःखातिसंविग्नो राममेव शनैः शनैः। ततोऽन्तरं समालोक्य रावणो भिक्षुवेषधृक् ।। 37 ।।
सीतासमीपमगमत्स्फुरद्दण्डकमण्डलुः। सीता तमवलोक्याशु नत्वा सम्पूज्य भक्तितः ।। 38 ।।
कन्दमूलफलादीनि दत्त्वा स्वागतमब्रवीत्। मुने भुङ्क्ष्व फलादीनि विश्रमस्व यथासुखम् ।। 39 ।।
इदानीमेव भर्ता मे ह्यागमिष्यति ते प्रियम्। करिष्यति विशेषेण तिष्ठ त्वं यदि रोचते ।। 40 ।।

ityuktvā vadhyamānā sā svabāhubhyāṃ ruroda ha /
tacchrutvā lakṣmaṇaḥ karṇau pidhāyātīva duḥkhitaḥ //
māmevaṃ bhāṣase caṇḍi dhik tvāṃ nāśamupaiṣyasi /
ityuktvā vanadevībhyaḥ samarpya janakātmajām //
yayau duḥkhātisaṁvigno rāmameva śanaiḥ śanaiḥ /
tato'ntaraṃ samālokya rāvaṇo bhikṣuveṣadhṛk //
sītāsamīpamāgamatsphuraddaṇḍakamaṇḍaluḥ /
sītā tamavalokyāśu natvā sampūjya bhaktitaḥ //
kandamūlaphalādīni dattvā svāgatamabravīt /
mune bhuṅkṣva phalādīni viśramasva yathāsukham //
idānīmeva bhartā me hyāgamiṣyasi te priyam /
kariṣyati viśeṣeṇa tiṣṭha tvaṃ yadi rocate //

Saying these reproachful words, she starting beating her chest with her hands, and wept bitterly.

Hearing such heart-wrenching reprehensive, stern, scornful and accusing words from her, Laxman was aghast and distraught; he was overwhelmed with anguish and anger. He closed both his ears in disgust with his hands (35). He said disdainfully, 'Oh Chandi! [An epithet for a woman in anger; used insultingly] Shame to you that you say such abhorable, reprehensible and despicable words to me! This will cause you your own destruction (ruin)'.

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Saying this Laxman put her in the care of the patron goddesses of the forest (36), and being immensely anguished, perturbed, peeved, dejected, distraught and remorseful, he proceeded reluctantly, gloomly and slowly to where Sri Ram was.

Just at that time, seeing an opportune moment, Ravana assumed the form of a mendicant (37), complete with his staff and Kamandal (a water pot), and came to Sita. She bowed to him in respect as soon as she saw him disguised as a mendicant, worshipped him sincerely with due devotion (38), welcomed him by offering refreshment of edible roots, stems and fruits, and said, 'Oh hermit! Eat these fruits etc. and make yourself comfortable (39). My husband will be coming back in a short while. If you wish, wait for some more time. He can show some greater respect to you (i.e. you will be properly worshipped by him as an honoured guest, because I have my limitations as a woman)' (40).

[Note :—Verse nos. 31-36 show the effects of anger and false accusations. But we must remember that this is not the 'original' Sita speaking—she has concealed herself in the fire; it is her deceptive, shadowy Maya who speaks to Laxman. The lesson to draw is that Maya forcefully leads us astray from our chosen path and duty, and it fills us with agitations and anguish, anger and frustration, leading to reckless behaviour and our ultimate ruin.]

भिक्षुरुवाच

का त्वं कमलपत्राक्षि को वा भर्ता तवानघे। किमर्थमत्र ते वासो वने राक्षससेविते।
ब्रूहि भद्रे ततः सर्वं स्ववृत्तान्तं निवेदये।।41।।

bhikṣuruvāca

kā tvaṃ kamalapatrākṣi ko vā bhartā tavānaghe/
kimarthamatra te vāso vane rākṣasasevite/
brūhi bhadre tataḥ sarvaṃ svavṛttāntaṃ nivedaye//

Ravana, who was in the disguise of a mendicant, said, 'Oh the lotus-eyed one! Who are you? Who is your husband? Oh the immaculate, faultless, sinless one! Why do you live in this forest inhabited by demons? Oh the auspicious one! Tell me all this, then I shall also tell you about myself' (41).

सीतोवाच

अयोध्याधिपतिः श्रीमान् राजा दशरथो महान्। तस्य ज्येष्ठः सुतो रामः सर्वलक्षणलक्षितः।।42।।
तस्याहं धर्मतः पत्नी सीता जनकनन्दिनी। तस्य भ्राता कनीयांश्च लक्ष्मणो भ्रातृवत्सलः।।43।।

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पितुराज्ञां पुरस्कृत्य दण्डके वस्तुमागतः। चतुर्दश समास्त्वां तु ज्ञातुमिच्छामि मे वद।।44।।

sītovāca

ayodhyādhipatiḥ śrīmān rājā daśaratho mahān /
tasya jyeṣṭhaḥ suto rāmaḥ sarvalakṣaṇalakṣitaḥ //
tasyāhaṃ dharmataḥ patnī sītā janakanandinī /
tasya bhrātā kanīyāṅśca lakṣmaṇo bhrātṛvatsalaḥ //
piturājñāṃ puraskṛtya daṇḍake vastumāgataḥ /
caturdaśa samāstvāṃ tu jñātumicchāmi me vada //

Sita said—'Oh mendicant! Sri Dashrath, the great king, was the ruler of Ayodhya. His eldest son is Sri Ram who possesses all good characters and virtues (42). I, Sita, the daughter of Janak, am his wife. His younger brother is Laxman. He (Laxman) is very fond of his brother (Sri Ram) (43). Sri Ram along with us two has come to live in the Dandakaranya forest for fourteen years on the orders of his father. Now I want to know about you. You should also tell me about yourself' (44).

भिक्षुरुवाच

पौलस्त्यतनयोऽहं तु रावणो राक्षसाधिपः। त्वत्कामपरितप्तोऽहं त्वां नेतुं पुरमागतः।।45।।
मुनिवेषेण रामेण किं करिष्यसि मां भज। भुङ्क्ष्व भोगान्मया सार्धं त्यज दुःखं वनोद्भवम्।।46।।

bhikṣuruvāca

paulastyatanayo'haṃ tu rāvaṇo rākṣasādhipaḥ /
tvatkāmaparitapto'haṃ tvāṃ netuṃ puramāgataḥ //
muniveṣeṇa rāmeṇa kiṃ karisyasi māṃ bhaja /.
bhuṅkṣva bhogānmayā sārdhaṃ tyaja duḥkhaṃ vanodbhavam //

The mendicant replied—'I am Ravana, the king of demons and the son of Vishrawa of the Pulastya clan (or a grand son of Pulastya). I yearn to possess you; hence, I have come here to take you with me to my capital (at Lanka) (45). What will you get (benefit) from that Ram who is attired as a hermit? Have affection and love for me, and avoid all the hardships (and sorrows, troubles and miseries) associated with a life in the wild forest. Instead, enjoy various types of comforts and pleasures with me' (46).

सीतोवाच

श्रुत्वा तद्वचनं सीता भीता किञ्चिदुवाच तम्। यद्येवं भाषसे मां त्वं नाशमेष्यसि राघवात्।।47।।
आगमिष्यति रामोऽपि क्षणं तिष्ठ सहानुजः। मां को धर्षयितुं शक्तो हरेर्भार्यां शशो यथा।।48।।

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sītovāca

śrutvā tadvacanaṃ sītā bhītā kiñciduvāca tam /
yadyevaṃ bhāṣase māṃ tvaṃ nāśameṣyasi rāghavāt //
āgamiṣyati rāmo'pi kṣaṇaṃ tiṣṭha sahānujaḥ /
māṃ ko dharṣayituṃ śakto harerbhāryāṃ śaśo yathā //

Hearing these audacious words of Ravana, Sita became a little scared, and said to him, 'If you say such things to me, Raghav (Sri Ram) will destroy (punish) you (47). Just wait a little while, Sri Ram shall be coming soon with his younger brother. Who can use force with me? Is it possible that a rabbit uses force against a lioness? (48).

[Note—Sita was 'a little' scared and not dreadfully terrified out of her wits when she came to know who her guest was! This reflects her self confidence and the fact that as long as Sri Ram is around, no one can dare harm her. Another connotation of this statement is this—she wished to tell him to hurry and do what he has come to do, for the Lord was on his way back and there is little time to lose. This was a subtle sign to Ravana to act in haste. Sita also falls in the special category of devotees who didn't bother about their own hardships as long as they could help in aiding in the implementation of the divine scheme of the Lord, which in this case was to eliminate the demonic forces from the surface of the earth and restore order and righteousness. Had Sita not warned Ravana about the imminent arrival of the Lord, he might have been caught red-handed, and then Sri Ram would been left with no option but to kill him there and then, because it would have been highly improper and imprudent for him to look the other way when he found another person alone with his wife in a lonely forest while he was away.]

रामबाणैर्विभिन्नस्त्वं पतिष्यसि महीतले। इति सीतावचः श्रुत्वा रावणः क्रोधमूर्च्छितः ।। 49 ।।
स्वरूपं दर्शयामास महापर्वतसन्निभम्। दशास्यं विंशतिभुजं कालमेघसमद्युतिम् ।। 50 ।।

rāmabāṇairvibhinnastvaṃ patiṣyasi mahītale /
iti sītāvacaḥ śrutvā rāvaṇaḥ krodhamūrcchitaḥ //
svarūpaṃ darśayāmāsa mahāparvatasannibham /
daśāsyaṃ viṁśatibhujaṃ kālameghasamadyutim //

Being pierced (shot) and torn (cut) to pieces, you'll soon sleep (lie dead) on the surface of the earth in a short while from now (i.e. you will soon die at the hands of Sri Ram)'.

Hearing such (scornful, sarcastic, bold and reproachful) words of Sita, Ravana became extremely peeved and agitated with anger (49). He showed her his colossus, mountainous form which had ten heads

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and twenty arms, and which had the fearful and awe inspiring countenance resembling that of a black cloud (of dooms day) (50).

तद्दृष्ट्वा वनदेव्यश्च भूतानि च वितत्रसुः। ततो विदार्य धरणीं नखैरुद्धृत्य बाहुभिः।। 51।।
तोलयित्वा रथे क्षिप्त्वा ययौ क्षिप्रं विहायसा। हा राम हा लक्ष्मणेति रुदती जनकात्मजा।।52।।
भयोद्विग्नमना दीना पश्यन्ती भुवमेव सा। श्रुत्वा तत्क्रन्दितं दीनं सीतायाः पक्षिसत्तमः।।53।।
जटायुरुत्थितः शीघ्रं नगाग्रात्तीक्ष्णतुण्डकः। तिष्ठ तिष्ठेति तं प्राह को गच्छति ममाग्रतः।।54।।
मुषित्वा लोकनाथस्य भार्यां शून्याद्वनालयात्। शुनको मन्त्रपूतं त्वं पुरोडाशमिवाध्वरे।।55।।

taddṛṣṭvā vanadevyaśca bhūtāni ca vitatrasuḥ/
tato vidārya dharaṇīṃ nakhairuddhṛtya bāhubhiḥ//
tolayitvā rathe kṣiptvā yayau kṣipraṃ vihāyasā/
hā rāma hā lakṣmaṇeti rudatī janakātmajā//
bhayodvignamanā dīnā paśyantī bhuvameva sā/
śrutvā tatkranditaṃ dīnaṃ sītāyāḥ pakṣisattamaḥ//
jaṭāyurutthitaḥ śīghraṃ nagāgrāttīkṣṇatuṇḍakaḥ/
tiṣṭha tiṣṭheti taṃ prāha ko gacchati mamāgrataḥ//
muṣitvā lokanāthasya bhāryāṃ śūnyādvanālayāt/
śunako mantrapūtaṃ tvaṃ puroḍāśamivādhvare//

Seeing that fearful, horrifying and terrible form, the patron Goddesses and Gods of the forest as well as the forest dwelling creatures became immensely scared and horrified. [Perhaps this is the reason why the forest Goddesses whom Laxman had entrusted the security of Sita did not react and tried to protect her. Refer verse no. 36.]

Then Ravana used his nails to dig and scoop-up the earth beneath Sita and lifted it in his hands along with her (51), put it on his chariot and sped away through the path of the sky. At that time, Sita became utterly horrified and scared stiff; she wept bitterly and wailed aloud 'Oh Ram, Oh Laxman!' (52). Sita became terribly frightened and looked pitifully and haplessly at the ground below.

Hearing these loud woeful wailings of Sita for help, Jatau, the best among vultures (53), who had a sharp beak, got up from the summit of the mountain, and said (to Ravana), 'Oh stop you! Like the dog which surreptitiously takes away (steals) 'Purodaash' material of the fire sacrifice, who are you who is taking away the wife of the Lord of the Lokas (i.e. Sri Ram) from this lonely, dense forest in front of me while I'm still around?' (54-55).

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[Note—(1) A remarkable thing has happened here. Ravana had not 'touched' Sita in order to take her away; he did not grab her by her hands and forcefully put her on his chariot. Instead, he had 'scooped up the entire earth from beneath her feet' and transplanted her like a gardener transplants saplings from one place to another. Had he attempted to catch hold of her hands in order to pull her on the chariot, the truth about Sita being a 'shadow' would have been revealed to him and this would have crashed the entire scheme of the Lord. This is how and why the supreme Lord, who can do anything merely by his wish, uses the Maya, which is his own delusion and illusion creating power, to accomplish what he wants. When Sita was planted on the soil of Lanka, the Lord was able to subtly, imperceptibly, surreptitiously and cleverly infiltrate the impregnable fort of Lanka by injection his own subordinate called 'Maya' (in the form of Sita) in the very heart of Ravana's own city and his own palace. Ensconced firmly inside the very core of Ravana's heart and his physical palace, this Maya in the form of Sita could do what Sri Ram had planned in advance, for from within the walls of the city, this Maya would corrupt and dilute Ravana's fighting machinery, his wisdom and capabilities by weaving a spell of magical charm around the whole setup like a magician misleading his audience and making them believe what he says. She would ensure that whatever chances that existed of Ravana mending his ways and coming round to reason, would be scuttled, and the Lord would easily be able to overcome a most formidable enemy of the Gods. This explains why Sita had taken the initiative to take the first step towards going to the forest exile earlier in Ayodhya Kand. She had subtly implied that the Lord need not worry because she would lead the way throughout. This is exactly what she has done now!

(2) According to legends in the Purans, Ravana had tried to rape two Apsaras or celestial damsels called Punjiksthala and Rambha on some earlier occasion, and was then cursed by Brahma and Nal Kuber, son of Kuber, respectively that if he tried to force himself upon any woman against her wishes in future, his head will split in 100 pieces. This is the reason why Ravana did not dare touch Sita and, in order to abduct her, scooped up the ground from underneath her feet.

(3) Purodaash is the cooked material, such as flakes of flour, rice etc., used to offer oblations to the Gods during the performance of sacred ritualistic fire sacrifice; stray dogs steal the left over offerings meant for Gods. Here, Jatau treats Ravana with utter contempt by calling him a dog.

इत्युक्त्वा तीक्ष्णतुण्डेन चूर्णयामास तद्रथम्। वाहान्बिभेद पादाभ्यां चूर्णयामास तद्धनुः ।। 56 ।।
ततः सीतां परित्यज्य रावणः खड्गमाददे। चिच्छेद पक्षौ सामर्षः पक्षिराजस्य धीमतः ।। 57 ।।
पपात किञ्चिच्छेषेण प्राणेन भुवि पक्षिराट्। पुनरन्यरथेनाशु सीतामादाय रावणः ।। 58 ।।

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ityuktvā tīkṣṇatuṇḍena cūrṇayāmāsa tadratham /
vāhānbibheda pādābhyāṃ cūrṇayāmāsa taddhanuḥ //
tataḥ sītāṃ parityajya rāvaṇaḥ khadgamādade /
ciccheda pakṣau sāmarṣaḥ pakṣirājasya dhīmataḥ //
papāta kiñcicchеṣeṇa prāṇena bhuvi pakṣirāṭ /
punaranyarathenāśu sītāmādāya rāvaṇaḥ //

Saying this, Jatau used his sharp beaks to break his chariot to smithereens, used his claws to kill the horses and cut Ravana's bow to pieces (56). Then Ravana left Sita aside, took out his sword, and out of frustration and exasperation, he cut-off the wings of Jatau (57). With the wings chopped off, the poor Jatau became helpless and fell upon the ground almost half dead. Then Ravana put Sita in a second (reserve) chariot and sped off (58).

[Note :—This verse shows that he had another standby chariot ready for contingencies. How come he had two chariots? When he has visited Marich, he had brought along two chariots—one for himself and the other for Marich. But since Marich boarded the chariot along with him—see Canto 6, verse no. 38—the other chariot was towed along for emergencies.]

क्रोशन्ती राम रामेति त्रातारं नाधिगच्छति। हा राम हा जगन्नाथ मां न पश्यसि दुःखिताम्।। 59।।
राक्षसा नीयमानां स्वां भार्यां मोचय राघव। हा लक्ष्मण महाभाग त्राहि मामपराधिनीम्।।60।।

krośantī rāma rāmeti trātāraṃ nādhigacchati /
hā rāma hā jagannātha māṃ na paśyasi duḥkhitām //
rakṣasā nīyamānāṃ svāṃ bhāryāṃ mocaya rāghava /
hā lakṣmaṇa mahābhāga trāhi māmaparādhinīm //

At that time, finding no one to come to her rescue and save her, Sita repeatedly called out haplessly and helplessly to Sri Ram, weeping and wailing woefully—'Oh Sri Ram! Oh the Lord of the world! Don't you (or can't you) see this distressed and tormented me? (59). Oh Raghav! Your wife is being taken away (forcefully) by a demon, you must liberate her. Oh the great Laxman! Protect me, who am the culprit (i.e. I am guilty of casting aspersions on you and on your character and your integrity, ridiculing you and forcing you to abandon me alone in the forest. It is my fault that I am being kidnapped and made to suffer. That is why I call myself a culprit) (60).

वाक्शरेण हतस्त्वं मे क्षन्तुमर्हसि देवर। इत्येवं क्रोशमानां तां रामागमनशङ्कया।। 61।।
जगाम वायुवेगेन सीतामादाय सत्वरः। विहायसा नीयमाना सीतापश्यदधोमुखी।। 62।।

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पर्वताग्रे स्थितान्पञ्च वानरान्वारिजानना। उत्तरीयार्धखण्डेन विमुच्याभरणादिकम्।। 63।।
बद्ध्वा चिक्षेप रामाय कथयन्त्विति पर्वते। ततः समुद्रमुल्लङ्घ्य लङ्कां गत्वा स रावणः।।64।।
स्वान्तःपुरे रहस्येतामशोकविपिनेऽक्षिपत्। राक्षसीभिः परिवृतां मातृबुद्ध्यान्वपालयत्।।65।।

vākśareṇa hatastvaṃ me kṣantumarhasi devara /
ityevaṃ krośamānāṃ tāṃ rāmāgamanaśaṅkayā //
jagāma vāyuvegena sītāmādāya satvaraḥ /
vihāyasā nīyamānā sītāpaśyadadhomukhī //
parvatāgre sthitānpañca vānarānvārijānanā /
uttarīyārdhakhaṇḍena vimucyābharaṇādikam //
baddhvā cakṣepi rāmāya kathayantviti parvate /
tataḥ samudramullaṅghya lakṅkāṃ gatvā sa rāvaṇaḥ //
svāntaḥpure rahasyetāmaśokavipine'kṣipat /
rākṣasībhiḥ parivṛtāṃ mātṛbuddhyānvapālayat //

'Oh brother-in-law! I had emotionally hurt you by shooting sharp acrimonious and insinuating words which were like a volley of scathing verbal arrows at you, and had accused you falsely of so many absurd things, such as of having ill-intentions against me and Sri Ram (words which I sincerely regret now; refer verse nos. 31-36). So forgive me!' Seeing Sita wailing and lamenting like this, and fearing that Sri Ram would hear her and arrive soon (61), Ravana moved speedily with great haste, as fast as the wind.

In this manner, while going through the sky and all the while looking downwards very eagerly and anxiously (for some remote sign of hope and succour, some flickering ray of light of redemption at the end of the dark tunnel, some help and salvation from any unexpected quarter that might spontaneously and voluntarily come forward to her aid even at the last moment, some pretext, however imaginary, that she could use to divert Ravana's attention and make good her escape, and looking for any possible chance of conveying to the Lord about the general direction she was being taken so that he can trace her some day and rescue her in future) (62), the lotus-eyed Sita saw five monkeys sitting on the top of a mountain (called Rishyamuk). Seeing them, she tore off her scarf into pieces, tied her ornaments in them with knots, and threw them down one by one on the mountain with the idea that these will tell Sri Ram about her (i.e. the direction by which she was going).

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Eventually, Ravana crossed the ocean and reached Lanka (63-64). There in a remote corner of his vast palace grounds, he placed her (Sita) in a secluded place called 'Ashok Van' (grove; garden). Keeping her surrounded (guarded) by demonesses, he protected her (kept a strict vigil on her) as if she was his mother (65).

[Note :—(1) Sita must have thrown at least 2-3 packets down, if not more. This was to help Sri Ram identify or chart authentically the general direction in which she was flying, because by drawing a straight line between any 2-3 points marked by the spots where he found these ornaments, it would be easy for Sri Ram to extend it in a straight line pointing in the general direction towards the south and south-east where she was headed in the captivity of her abductor, and where Lanka was situated. It is based on simple geometry. She also hoped against all odds that if luck favoured her, some one would pick these up and start hunting for the person to whom these belonged, and when finally the Lord comes that way and is informed about a lady going by the air route, wailing and lamenting woefully, he would be able to believe the news when he sees the ornaments, and not let the information pass by as some trap to mislead him.

(2) Mentally, Ravana revered her as his mother, but outwardly he had to play his role in the drama of which he was a villain as much as Sri Ram played his role as a hero inspite of him knowing everything before hand, even asserting that being the supreme Lord, he has no enmity or malice towards any one on many occasions. Ravana sustained or took care of Sita with the same reverential feeling as one has for his own mother. This verse is also remarkable in the sense that it absolves Ravana of any ill intentions against Sita, and his determination to attain emancipation and salvation by getting killed at the hands of the supreme Lord. To ensure that the Lord does not hesitate in slaying him at the last moment, thinking, inter alia, that he is a Brahmin, the killing of whom is an unpardonable offense, or pardoning him one last time, Ravana outwardly pretended that he is making Sita suffer. But internally he had the greatest of regards for her. This verse also strikes down in one sweeping stroke the casting of Ravana as the evil and pervert villain of the story. He indeed comes out as a soul trapped unwillingly in a vicious cycle of sins from which it eagerly yearns to escape at any cost, even if that cost means another round of one final sinful act.]

कृशातिदीना परिकर्मवर्जिता दुःखेन शुष्यद्वदनातिविह्वला।
हा राम रामेति विलप्यमाना सीता स्थिता राक्षसवृन्दमध्ये।। 66 ।।

kṛśātidīnā parikarmavarjitā duḥkhena śuṣyadvadanātivihvalā/
hā rāma rāmeti vilapyamānā sītā sthitā rākṣasavṛndamadhye//

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At that place, Sita, who had become very weak, emaciated, forlorn and miserably wretched, abandoned all ornamentations and external signs of well being. She was withered in body and extremely tormented mentally. She spent her days brooding gloomily and remorsefully lamenting, saying 'Oh Ram, Oh Ram' incessantly (66).

[Note :—Sita was undergoing immense mental distress and abject sense hopelessness which was more devastating for her health than any physical torture that she had to endure. Since Ravana had revered her as his mother, the chances of any physical torture were remote. She became emaciated and weak due to mental agonies, consternations and worries. She had become a mental and physical wreck in the process.]

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Aranya Kand — Canto 8

Sri Ram's lamentations and meeting with Jatau

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

रामो मायाविनं हत्वा राक्षसं कामरूपिणम्। प्रतस्थे स्वाश्रमं गन्तुं ततो दूराद्ददर्श तम्।।1।।
आयान्तं लक्ष्मणं दीनं मुखेन परिशुष्यता। राघवश्चिन्तयामास स्वात्मन्येव महामतिः।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

rāmo māyāvinaṃ hatvā rākṣasaṃ kāmarūpiṇam /
pratasthe svāśramaṃ gantuṃ tato dūrāddadarśa tam //
āyāntaṃ lakṣmaṇaṃ dīnaṃ mukhena pariśuṣyatā /
rāghavaścintayāmāsa svātmanyeva mahāmatiḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Here meanwhile, when Sri Ram had killed the deceptive imposter demon (Marich) and had turned back to return to his hermitage, he saw Laxman coming towards him from a distance. He had a remorseful and sullen face. The most wise Raghav (Sri Ram) thought to himself (1-2)—

लक्ष्मणस्तन्न जानाति मायासीतां मया कृताम्।
ज्ञात्वाप्येनं वञ्चयित्वा शोचामि प्राकृतो यथा।।3।।
यद्यहं विरतो भूत्वा तूष्णीं स्थास्यामि मन्दिरे। तदा राक्षसकोटीनां वधोपायः कथं भवेत्।।4।।

lakṣmaṇastanna jānāti māyāsītāṃ mayā kṛtām /
jñātvāpyenaṃ vañcayitvā śocāmi prākṛto yathā //

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yadyahaṃ virato bhūtvā tūṣṇīṃ sthāsyāmi mandire /
tadā rākṣasakoṭīnāṃ vadhopāyaḥ kathaṃ bhavet //

'Laxman does not know that I have created an illusionary Sita. I know it, but still I shall conceal this fact from Laxman and lament like an ordinary human (3). If I show dispassion and detachment, haplessness and helplessness or indifference, and sit quietly (as if shocked and stunned into inaction) in my hut/cottage like a recluse, then how can the wherewithal to kill the crores (millions) of demons be found; what other better means could be evolved or devised for the purpose? (4).

[Note—This verse explains why the Lord—who is supposed to be above the influence of Maya and not involved in worldly delusions and engrossed in any false attachments, who is considered an epitome of wisdom and enlightenment, who knew about where Sita was because he is all knowing and omniscient and had planned everything himself in advance in consultation with Sita—acted as he did in the forthcoming verses, crying and lamenting for his wife like a passionate ordinary man, why he showed that he is under immense grief and tormented like hell, and why he fought a ferocious war when he was expected to spend his days of forest exile as a peaceful hermit according to the demands of Kaikeyi to which he had acceded. We must remember at this point that the fact that Ram was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu with the special mandate to kill the evil demons was a closely guarded secret. This is amply made clear earlier by his Guru sage Vashistha in Ayodhya Kand, Canto 2, verse no.22-32, and Baal Kand, Canto 4, verse no.12-20.]

यदि शोचामि तां दुःखसन्तप्तः कामुको यथा। तदा क्रमेणानुचिन्वन्सीतां यास्येऽसुरालयम्।
रावणं सकुलं हत्वा सीतामग्नौ स्थितां पुनः।।5।।
मयैव स्थापितां नीत्वा यातायोध्यामतन्द्रितः। अहं मनुष्यभावेन जातोऽस्मि ब्रह्मणार्थितः।।6।।
मनुष्यभावमापन्नः किञ्चित्कालं वसामि कौ। ततो मायामनुष्यस्य चरितं मेऽनुशृण्वताम्।।7।।
मुक्तिः स्यादप्रयासेन भक्तिमार्गानुवर्तिनाम्। निश्चित्यैवं तदा दृष्ट्वा लक्ष्मणं वाक्यमब्रवीत्।।8।।

yadi śocāmi tāṃ duḥkhasantaptaḥ kāmuko yathā /
tadā krameṇānucinvansītāṃ yāsye'surālayam /
rāvaṇaṃ sakulaṃ hatvā sītāmagnau sthitāṃ punaḥ //
mayaiva sthāpitāṃ nītvā yātāyodhyāmatandritaḥ /
ahaṃ manuṣyabhāvena jāto'smi brahmaṇārthitaḥ //
manuṣyabhāvamāpannaḥ kiñcitkālaṃ vasāmi kau /
tato māyāmanuṣyasya caritaṃ me'nuśṛṇvatām //

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muktiḥ syādaprayāsena bhaktimārgānuvartinām /
niścityaivaṃ tadā dṛṣṭvā lakṣmaṇaṃ vākyamabravīt //

If, on the contrary, I pretend to be overcome with grief for her and lament woefully like a lustful and passionate person who has lost his dear wife, then I shall have an excuse to go in search of Sita and ultimately reach Ravana, kill him along with his compatriots, relatives, kith and kin (literally, the entire clan), retrieve Sita who has been entrusted to (i.e. put in the custody of) the sacred fire (5), and then proceed back to Ayodhya. I have taken a human form on the prayers of Brahma (6); hence I shall stay on this earth and behave like an ordinary human being. By doing this, some devotees who are devotedly inclined towards me and listen to the divine stories of my illusionary human form will get an easy opportunity to achieve salvation without much efforts (or even without their asking for it, because my holy name automatically provides salvation to the soul)'. Deciding thus, he (Sri Ram) looked at Laxman and said (7-8)—

किमर्थमागतोऽसि त्वं सीतां त्यक्त्वा मम प्रियाम्। नीता वा भक्षिता वापि राक्षसैर्जनकात्मजा ।। 9 ।।
लक्ष्मणः प्राञ्जलिः प्राह सीताया दुर्वचो रुदन्। हा लक्ष्मणेति वचनं राक्षसोक्तं श्रुतं तया ।। 10 ।।
त्वद्वाक्यसदृशं श्रुत्वा मां गच्छेति त्वराब्रवीत्। रुदन्ती सा मया प्रोक्ता देवि राक्षसभाषितम् ।। 11 ।।

kimarthamāgato'si tvaṃ sītāṃ tyaktvā mama priyām /
nītā vā bhakṣitā vāpi rākṣasairjanakātmajā //
lakṣmaṇaḥ prañjaliḥ prāha sītāyā durvaco rudan /
hā lakṣmaṇeti vacanaṃ rākṣasoktaṃ śrutaṃ tayā //
tvadvākyasadṛśaṃ śrutvā māṃ gaccheti tvarābravīt /
rudantī sā mayā proktā devi rākṣasabhāṣitam //

'Oh Laxman! How and why did you come here leaving behind my beloved Sita alone? Now by this time, the demons must have either stolen her or eaten her up' (9).

Then Laxman wept and submitted with joined palms that Sita had made serious allegations against him, telling the Lord that she forced him to come against his will—'Hearing the words of the demon calling out 'Ah Laxman' in your voice (or in a voice resembling yours), Sita told me to come to your help immediately. Then I tried to explain the situation to her as she wept, 'Oh goddess! These are not the words of Sri Ram, but the words of a demon' (10-11).

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नेदं रामस्य वचनं स्वस्था भव शुचिस्मिते। इत्येवं सान्त्विता साध्वी मया प्रोवाच मां पुनः।
यदुक्तं दुर्वचो राम न वाच्यं पुरतस्तव।। 12।।
कर्णौ पिधाय निर्गत्य यातोऽहं त्वां समीक्षितुम्। रामस्तु लक्ष्मणं प्राह तथाप्यनुचितं कृतम्।। 13।।
त्वया स्त्रीभाषितं सत्यं कृत्वा त्यक्ता शुभानना। नीता वा भक्षिता वापि राक्षसैर्नात्र संशयः।। 14।।

nedaṃ rāmasya vacanaṃ svasthā bhava śucismite/
ityevaṃ sāntvitā sādhvī mayā provāca māṃ punaḥ/
yaduktaṃ durvaco rāma na vācyaṃ puratastava//
karṇau pidhāya nirgatya yāto'haṃ tvāṃ samīkṣitum/
rāmastu lakṣmaṇaṃ prāha tathāpyanucitaṃ kṛtam//
tvayā strībhāṣitaṃ satyaṃ kṛtvā tyaktā śubhānanā/
nītā vā bhakṣitā vāpi rākṣasairnātra saṁśayaḥ//

Oh the auspicious, pure, virtuous and holy one! Be rest assured that there is nothing amiss, and cheer up and stop unnecessarily worrying'. Inspite of my efforts to reassure her, Sadhvi (virtuous, chaste, pure and holy) Sita hurled such scornful, accusation-filled, reprehensible and insinuating words at me that they are unworthy to be repeated in front of you (12). So I shut my ears in disgust and disdain, and came from there to see you'.

At this, Sri Ram said, 'Oh Laxman! It's alright, but still you have not done the right thing (13) by believing the words of a woman and leaving the auspicious Sita alone. Now there is no doubt that either the demons have stolen her or have eaten her up' (14).

इति चिन्तापरो रामः स्वाश्रमं त्वरितो ययौ। तत्रादृष्ट्वा जनकजां विललापातिदुःखितः।।15।।
हा प्रिये क्व गतासि त्वं नासि पूर्ववदाश्रमे। अथवा मद्विमोहार्थं लीलया क्व विलीयसे।।16।।

iti cintāparo rāmaḥ svāśramaṃ tvarito yayau/
tatrādṛṣṭvā janakajāṃ vilalāpātiduḥkhitaḥ//
hā priye kva gatāsi tvaṃ nāsi pūrvavadāśrame/
athavā madvimohārthaṃ līlayā kva vilīyase//

Worrying and very anxious in this manner, Sri Ram speedily came back to his hermitage, and not finding Sita there, he became extremely dismayed and began lamenting most remorsefully (15), 'Oh dear! You are not visible in the hermitage today; where have you gone? Or is it that you have hidden somewhere to play tricks on me?' (16).

इत्याचिन्वन्वनं सर्वं नापश्यज्जानकीं तदा। वनदेव्यः कुतः सीतां ब्रुवन्तु मम वल्लभाम्।। 17।।
मृगाश्च पक्षिणो वृक्षा दर्शयन्तु मम प्रियाम्। इत्येवं विलपन्नेव रामः सीतां न कुत्रचित्।। 18।।

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ityācinvanvanaṃ sarvaṃ nāpaśyajjānakīṃ tadā /
vanadevyaḥ kutaḥ sītāṃ bruvantu mama vallabhām //
mṛgāśca pakṣiṇo vṛkṣā darśayantu mama priyām /
ityevaṃ vilapanneva rāmaḥ sītāṃ na kutracit //

Lamenting woefully in this manner, he searched for her everywhere around the forest but could not find her. Then he said—'Oh the patron Goddesses of the forest! Tell me where is my dear wife Sita? Oh deer, birds and trees! Do show me my beloved Sita' (17). Searching frantically and lamenting gravely in this manner, Sri Ram failed to see (i.e. could not find) Sita anywhere (18).

सर्वज्ञः सर्वथा क्वापि नापश्यद्रघुनन्दनः। आनन्दोऽप्यन्वशोचत्तामचलोऽप्यनुधावति।। 19।।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारोऽप्यखण्डानन्दरूपवान्। मम जायेति सीतेति विललापातिदुःखितः।। 20।।
एवं मायामनुचरन्नसक्तोऽपि रघूत्तमः। आसक्त इव मूढानां भाति तत्त्वविदां न हि।। 21।।

sarvajñaḥ sarvathā kvāpi nāpaśyadraghunandanaḥ /
ānando'pyanvaśocattāmacalo'pyanudhāvati //
nirmamo nirahaṅkāro'pyakhaṇḍānandarūpavān /
mama jāyeti sīteti vilalāpātiduḥkhitaḥ //
evaṃ māyāmanucarannasakto'pi raghūttamaḥ /
āsakta iva mūḍhānāṃ bhāti tattvavidāṃ na hi //

[What a wonder that—] Raghunandan (Sri Ram), inspite of being wise, omniscient and all-knowing as well as an embodiment of bliss and happiness, mourned and grieved for Sita; inspite of being unmoving, steady, stable and unwavering, he ran around eagerly and anxiously here and there in search of her (19); inspite of being free of all emotions of having attractions, endearments or affections towards anyone, inspite of having no ego, pride, arrogance or haughtiness, and inspite of being supreme embodiment of eternal, imperishable and uniform bliss, happiness, contentedness, peace and tranquility—he most remorsefully and haplessly wailed for Sita, wistfully saying 'Oh my Sita and oh my dearest wife' (20).

In this manner, following his own decision to act like an ordinary human being engulfed (surrounded, enveloped) by Maya (delusions of all kinds and their accompaniments), the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) appears to be infatuated, passionate and wistful like an ignorant and lustful man inspite of being unattached to and detached from all. But those who have knowledge of the essential truth and reality, who

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are aware of the true and real form of things, or in short are enlightened and wise, do not have any doubt and suspicion about it (i.e. about Sri Ram's behaviour as an ordinary human being suffering from the agonies of separation from his wife, causing doubts about his divinity and supreme stature as the Lord of creation) (21).

एवं विचिन्वन्सकलं वनं रामः सलक्ष्मणः। भग्नं रथं छत्रचापं कूबरं पतितं भुवि।। 22।।
दृष्ट्वा लक्ष्मणमाहेदं पश्य लक्ष्मण केनचित्। नीयमानां जनकजां तं जित्वान्यो जहार ताम्।।23।।

evaṃ vicinvansakalaṃ vanaṃ rāmaḥ salakṣmaṇaḥ /
bhagnaṃ rathaṃ chatracāpaṃ kūbaraṃ patitaṃ bhuvi //
dṛṣṭvā lakṣmaṇamāhedaṃ paśya lakṣmaṇa kenacit /
nīyamānāṃ janakajāṃ taṃ jitvānyo jahāra tām //

Searching for Sita in the entire forest accompanied by Laxman, Sri Ram found the broken parts of the chariot (of Ravana)—broken parasols and royal umbrellas, the bows and other wooden parts—lying scattered on the ground (22). Seeing them, he said to Laxman, 'Oh Laxman! Look! It appears that while Sita was being taken away by her abductor, some other man has defeated the first one in a duel and has taken Sita away himself' (23).

ततः कञ्चिद्भुवो भागं गत्वा पर्वतसन्निभम्। रुधिराक्तवपुर्दृष्ट्वा रामो वाक्यमथाब्रवीत्।। 24।।
एष वै भक्षयित्वा तां जानकीं शुभदर्शनाम्। शेते विविक्तेऽतितृप्तः पश्य हन्मि निशाचरम्।।25।।
चापमानय शीघ्रं मे बाणं च रघुनन्दन। तच्छ्रुत्वा रामवचनं जटायुः प्राह भीतवत्।। 26।।

tataḥ kañcidbhavo bhāgaṃ gatvā parvatasannibham /
rudhirāktavapurdṛṣṭvā rāmo vākyamathābravīt //
eṣa vai bhakṣayitvā tāṃ jānakīṃ śubhadarśanam /
śete vivikte'titṛptaḥ paśya hanmi niśācaram //
cāpamānaya śīghraṃ me bāṇaṃ ca raghunandana /
tacchrutvā rāmavacanaṃ jaṭāyuḥ prāha bhītavat //

After going some distance, he saw a huge mountain-like body soaked in blood (lying on the ground). Sri Ram said (24), 'Look! Without doubt this is the one who has eaten up the auspicious-to-look-at Janki (Sita), felt fully satisfied, and is now sleeping here alone (after having a satisfying meal). I will kill this demon immediately (25). Oh Raghunandan (Laxman)! Bring my bow and arrow quickly'. Hearing these words of Sri Ram, Jatau was appalled and terrified. He said (26)—

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मां न मारय भद्रं ते म्रियमाणं स्वकर्मणा। अहं जटायुस्ते भार्याहारिणं समनुद्रुतः।। 27।।
रावणं तत्र युद्धं मे बभूवारिविमर्दन। तस्य वाहान् रथं चापं छित्त्वाहं तेन घातितः।। 28।।
पतितोऽस्मि जगन्नाथ प्राणांस्त्यक्ष्यामि पश्य माम्।। 29।।

māṃ na māraya bhadraṃ te mriyamāṇaṃ svakarmaṇā /
ahaṃ jaṭāyuste bhāryāhāriṇaṃ samanudrutaḥ //
rāvaṇaṃ tatra yuddhaṃ me babhūvārivimardana /
tasya vāhān rathaṃ cāpaṃ chittvāhaṃ tena ghātitaḥ //
patito'smi jagannātha prāṇāṁstyakṣyāmi paśya mām //

'I am already dying due to my deeds. You be blessed—you do not have to kill me. I am Jatau. I had pursued Ravana who was hastily taking your wife away (27). Oh the crusher of enemies! I had a fierce duel with him and I was able to destroy his chariot, horses and bow, but I was no match for him and was mortally wounded by him (28). This is why I am lying here. Oh Jagannath (Lord of the world/universe)! Look at me, the wretched, lowly and sinful creature. I want to die now' (29).

तच्छ्रुत्वा राघवो दीनं कण्ठप्राणं ददर्श ह। हस्ताभ्यां संस्पृशन् रामो दुःखाश्रुवृतलोचनः।। 30।।
जटायो ब्रूहि मे भार्यां केन नीता शुभानना। मत्कार्यार्थं हतोऽसि त्वमतो मे प्रियबान्धवः।।31।।

tacchrutvā rāghavo dīnaṃ kaṇṭhaprāṇaṃ dadarśa ha /
hastābhyāṃ saṁspṛśan rāmo duḥkhāśruvṛtalocanaḥ //
jaṭāyo brūhi me bhāryā kena nītā śubhānanā /
matkāryārthaṃ hato'si tvamato me priyabāndhavaḥ //

Hearing this, Raghav (Sri Ram) went close to Jatau and found him close to death, with his throat almost chocked and life about to leave him. He was in a very precarious, miserable and pitiable condition. Then Sri Ram filled his eyes with tears of mercy benevolence and sympathy, affectionately massaged (caressed) Jatau's body with his hands and said (30), 'Oh Jatau! Say, who has taken away my sweet-faced wife? You have died for my sake (while doing my work). Hence, surely you are my dear friend' (31).

जटायुः सन्नया वाचा वक्त्रादुक्तं समुद्वमन्। उवाच रावणो राम राक्षसो भीमविक्रमः।। 32।।
आदाय मैथिलीं सीतां दक्षिणाभिमुखो ययौ। इतो वक्तुं न मे शक्तिः प्राणांस्त्यक्ष्यामि तेऽग्रतः।।33।।
दिष्ट्या दृष्टोऽसि राम त्वं म्रियमाणेन मेऽनघ। परमात्मासि विष्णुस्त्वं मायामनुजरूपधृक्।।34।।

jaṭāyuḥ sannayā vācā vaktrādraktaṃ samudvaman /
uvāca rāvaṇo rāma rākṣaso bhīmavikramaḥ //

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ādāya maithilīṃ sītāṃ dakṣiṇābhimukho yayau /
ito vaktuṃ na me śaktiḥ prāṇāṁstyakṣyāmi te'grataḥ //
diṣṭyā dṛṣṭo'si rāma tvaṃ mriyamāṇena me'nagha /
paramātmāsi viṣṇustvaṃ māyāmanujarūpadhṛk //

Vomiting blood, Jatau spoke with a faltering voice—'Oh Sri Ram! The most valorous, powerful, strong and renowned king of demons, Ravana (32), has taken away the daughter of the king of Mithila, Sita, towards the south direction. I do not have the strength left in me to speak more. I want to die (i.e. my soul wants to leave my mortal body) immediately in front of you (33). Oh Sri Ram! It is my great fortune that I have been able to see you at the time of my death. Oh the sinless, faultless, pure and almighty one! You are Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord known as Parmatma, disguised in the form of an ordinary human being (34).

अन्तकालेऽपि दृष्ट्वा त्वां मुक्तोऽहं रघुसत्तम। हस्ताभ्यां स्पृश मां राम पुनर्यास्यामि ते पदम्।। 35।।
तथेति रामः पस्पर्श तदङ्गं पाणिना स्मयन्। ततः प्राणान्परित्यज्य जटायुः पतितो भुवि।। 36।।
रामस्तमनुशोचित्वा बन्धुवत्साश्रुलोचनः। लक्ष्मणेन समानाय्य काष्ठानि प्रददाह तम्।। 37।।

antakāle'pi dṛṣṭvā tvāṃ mukto'haṃ raghusattama /
hastābhyāṃ spṛśa māṃ rāma punaryāsyāmi te padam //
tatheti rāmaḥ pasparśa tadaṅgaṃ pāṇinā smayan /
tataḥ prāṇānparityajya jaṭāyuḥ patito bhuvi //
rāmastamanuśocitvā bandhuvatsāśrulocanaḥ /
lakṣmaṇena samānāyya kāṣṭhāni pradadāha tam //

Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! Though I have found liberation and deliverance by merely having your holy sight (Darshan), you still must touch me with your hands. Then I shall go to the highest stature attainable by a soul known as the 'Param Pad' (which literally means the supreme title or honour that one can hope to acquire)' (35).

Saying 'alright', Sri Ram smiled and touched his body with his hands. Then Jatau's soul exited from his body which fell to the ground, dead (36). Sri Ram mourned for him with tearful eyes as if he were his own kin, and asked Laxman to bring fire-wood and did Jatau's last rites himself (i.e. cremated him with his own hands) (37).

स्नात्वा दुःखेन रामोऽपि लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः। हत्वा वने मृगं तत्र मांसखण्डान्समन्ततः।। 38।।
शाद्वले प्राक्षिपद्रामः पृथक् पृथगनेकधा। भक्षन्तु पक्षिणः सर्वे तृप्तो भवतु पक्षिराट्।। 39।।

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snātvā duḥkhena rāmo'pi lakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ /
hatvā vane mṛgaṃ tatra māṁsakhaṇḍānsamantataḥ //
śādvale prākṣipadrāmaḥ pṛthak pṛthaganekadhā /
bhakṣantu pakṣiṇaḥ sarve tṛpto bhavatu pakṣirāṭ //

[Deciding to do his 'Shradh' (after-death rituals in which kith and kin of the deceased are fed with food which has been sanctified by offering it to Gods as an exercise to pray for the peace of the departed soul) befitting Jatau's birth as a cadaver eating vulture, Sri Ram made the following arrangement—] Both Sri Ram and Laxman were equally sorry and grieved at the death of Jatau, and they took a bath (to purify themselves before performing the Shradh ceremony). Thereafter, they went and searched for dead animals in the surrounding forest and cut their flesh into small pieces (38). They then made separate heaps of these pieces of meat at a place covered with grass (a meadow) and which had a water hole (a pond) as a means of offering a token sacrifice for atonement of sins of the departed soul. These heaps of cut flesh were then eaten by flesh-eating birds such as vultures as well as other compatriots of Jatau as a feast to mark his 'Shradh' ceremony, and this ritual gave immense contentment to all the birds as well as to the soul of the king of birds (Jatau) (39).

[Note :—Jatau was the one figure in the whole of Ramayan whose 'Shradh' ceremony, the religious rites performed after the death of a near relative or kin, was done so elaborately by Sri Ram. There were others also, one was Shabari, the tribal woman who also died in the presence of the Lord and whose last rites were done by him as described in Canto 10, and the other was the ogre named Kabandh, whose episode appears in Canto 9. These three were the most fortunate ones in the whole story. Sri Ram's own father Dashrath didn't have had this great privilege so much so that he didn't even have the chance to look at the Lord to his heart full though Ram was his own son. The formality of Dashrath's Shradh was done at Chitrakoot when Bharat had come to take Sri Ram back to Ayodhya, but that was merely a formality that was done as a matter of routine.

To perform the funeral of a vulture and especially observe the elaborate ritual of Shradh by feeding the kith and kin of the dead to pray for peace of the departed soul is unparalleled anywhere else. It is a marvel and a showpiece of the benevolent and gracious nature of the Lord; it proves incontrovertibly that the Lord believes more on sincerity of purpose and purity of heart than anything else, including high birth and doing elaborate rituals to attain salvation, for obviously a vulture never did it. It is so striking that the Lord performed the last rites observing all basic

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guidelines for such rituals, such as feeding food that was staple food of the dead person and that which is eaten by his caste and clan. For this purpose, Sri Ram did not hesitate a moment that it is unconventional for a man to perform the cremation rites of a lowly vulture and even go to the extreme trouble of collecting cadavers from the forest, cutting them to pieces so that meat could be served to the kith and kin of Jatau. That is why the Lord is called so merciful and malleable that when it comes to take care of his devotees who have offered their lives in the service of the Lord, he never dithers to do anything for their welfare and well being. This single incident is a sterling example of the Lord's munificent, merciful, magnanimous, benevolent and graceful nature.

Doing Shabari's funeral was also exemplary, but she was a human while Jatau was a vulture, while the funeral of Kabandh involved simply burning his mortal body in a fire pit. Therefore, the funeral of Jatau assumes all the more importance and is a shining example of the Lord's marvelous nature of benevolence and graciousness on the downtrodden and the unfortunate ones who are sincerely at his service.]

इत्युक्त्वा राघवः प्राह जटायो गच्छ मत्पदम्। मत्सारूप्यं भजस्वाद्य सर्वलोकस्य पश्यतः॥40॥
ततोऽनन्तरमेवासौ दिव्यरूपधरः शुभः। विमानवरमारुह्य भास्वरं भानुसन्निभम्॥41॥

ityuktvā rāghavaḥ prāha jaṭāyo gaccha matpadam /
matsārūpyaṃ bhajasvādya sarvalokasya paśyataḥ //
tato'nantaramevāsau divyarūpadharaḥ śubhaḥ /
vimānavaramāruhya bhāsvaraṃ bhānusannibham //

Raghav (Sri Ram) told him, 'Jatau! Go to my exalted abode (or attain the exalted stature of emancipation and salvation) and achieve oneness with me (i.e. become one with my divine, true form)' (40). After that, he (Jatau) assumed a radiantly divine form and boarded a heavenly chariot which was illuminated like a sun (41).

शङ्खचक्रगदापद्मकिरीटवरभूषणैः। द्योतयन्स्वप्रकाशेन पीताम्बरधरोऽमलः॥42॥
चतुर्भिः पार्षदैर्विष्णोस्तादृशैरभिपूजितः। स्तूयमानो योगिगणै राममाभाष्य सत्वरः।
कृताञ्जलिपुटो भूत्वा तुष्टाव रघुनन्दनम्॥43॥

śaṅkhacakragadāpadmakirīṭavarabhūṣaṇaiḥ /
dyotayansvaprakāśena pītāmbaradharo'malaḥ //
caturbhiḥ pārṣadairviṣṇostādṛśairabhipūjitaḥ /
stūyamāno yogiganaiḥ rāmamābhāṣya satvaraḥ /
kṛtāñjaliputo bhūtvā tuṣṭāva raghunandanam //

At that time, wearing a Pitambar (yellow body wrapping seamless

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piece of silk cloth) and bearing a conch, a discus, a mace, a lotus, a crown and other excellent ornaments, he (Jatau) was illuminating all the directions with the divine light (radiance) effusing from his body (42). Four servers of Lord Vishnu attired similarly were worshipping him, while Yogis (ascetics) were praying to him. Then he (Jatau) hastily folded his hands, and addressing Raghunandan (Sri Ram), he began to pray earnestly as follows (43)—

[Note :—The description in verse no. 42 shows that Jatau had attained oneness with Lord Vishnu so much so that his physical form also resembled that of the Lord.]

जटायुरुवाच

अगणितगुणमप्रमेयमाद्यं सकलजगत्स्थितिसंयमादिहेतुम्।
उपरमपरमं परात्मभूतं सततमहं प्रणतोऽस्मि रामचन्द्रम्।।44।।

jaṭāyuruvāca

agaṇitaguṇamaprameyamādyaṃ sakalajagatsthitisaṁyamādihetum/
uparamaparaṃ parātmabhūtaṃ satatamahaṃ praṇato'smi rāmacandram//

Jatau said (prayed), 'I remain perpetually bowed in great reverence before Sri Ramchandra who has (possesses, is endowed with) immeasurable auspicious virtues and good characteristics, who is boundless, measureless, limitless and without any parameters, who is the original cause of creation, its sustenance and its ultimate annihilation, who is an embodiment of supreme peace, tranquility and serenity, and is the most exalted and supreme Soul in the creation, called the Parmatma (44).

निरवधिसुखमिन्दिराकटाक्षक्षपितसुरेन्द्रचतुर्मुखादिदुःखम्।
नरवरमनिशं नतोऽस्मि रामं वरदमहं वरचापबाणहस्तम्।।45।।

niravadhisukhamindirākaṭākṣakṣapitasurendracaturmukhādiduḥkham /
naravaramaniśaṃ nato'smi rāmaṃ varadamahaṃ varacāpabāṇahastam//

I bow most reverentially day and night before Sri Ram who is an embodiment (or treasury, an abode) of and remains submerged in measureless bliss, happiness and joys, who is the object of affectionate side ways (oblique, askance) glances of Laxmi, who is the remover of the miseries, grief, troubles and tribulations of the Lord of Gods (Indra) as well as of the four-headed Lord (Brahma) and other Gods, who is the best among humans and bestows boons, and who holds a bow and arrows in his hands (45).

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त्रिभुवनकमनीयरूपमीड्यं रविशतभासुरमीहितप्रदानम्।
शरणदमनिशं सुरागमूले कृतनिलयं रघुनन्दनं प्रपद्ये।।46।।

tribhuvanakamanīyarūpamīḍyaṃ raviśatabhāsuramīhitapradānam /
śaraṇadamaniśaṃ surāgamūle kṛtanilayaṃ raghunandanaṃ prapadye //

I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Raghunandan (Sri Ram) who is the most beautiful, astoundingly attractive, enchantingly captivating and stupendously charming in the whole of the three worlds (subterranean, terrestrial and celestial), who is worthy of being praised, revered and honoured by all, who is as splendorous, radiant and glorious as hundreds of Suns taken together, who bestows (gives, grants) all the desired or deserved fruits or rewards (to his devotees), who constantly, day and night, gives shelter and refuge in his holy feet to those who seek it, and who resides in their affectionate and loveable hearts (46).

भवविपिनदवाग्निनामधेयं भवमुखदैवतदैवतं दयालुम्।
दनुजपतिसहस्रकोटिनाशं रवितनयासदृशं हरिं प्रपद्ये।।47।।

bhavavipinadavāgnināmadheyaṃ bhavamukhadaivatadaivataṃ dayālum /
danujapatisahasrakoṭināśaṃ ravitanayāsadṛśaṃ hariṃ prapadye //

I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Hari (Sri Ram) whose potent holy name resembles a powerful wild fire for the purpose of destroying this world which is like a dense and impenetrable forest, who is the supreme God who is revered, honoured and worshipped even by Lord Shiva and other Gods, who is the crusher and vanquisher of crores (millions) of demons and their kings, who is dark complexioned like the waters of the holy river Yamuna, and who is most gracious, kind, benevolent, merciful and compassionate[7] (47).

अविरतभवभावनातिदूरं भवविमुखैर्मुनिभिः सदैव दृश्यम्।
भवजलधिसुतारणाङ्घ्रिपोतं शरणमहं रघुनन्दनं प्रपद्ये।।48।।

aviratabhavabhāvanātidūraṃ bhavavimukhairmunibhiḥ sadaiva dṛśyam/
bhavajaladhisutāraṇāṅghripotaṃ śaraṇamahaṃ raghunandanaṃ prapadye //

I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Raghunandan (Sri Ram) who is perpetually far away from the reach of and sight of (i.e. inaccessible to) those who are regularly, as a matter

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of habit, natural inclination and temperament, passionately involved with, are infatuated with, are emotionally attached with, are insatiably attracted to, have an unsatisfied yearning for, are madly running behind and seeking wistfully this material world of artificiality and its illusive comforts. On the other hand, he is always easily visible (accessible, attainable) to those exalted sages, seers, hermits, ascetics and other exalted, realised and holy ones who are detached, uninterested, indifferent and dispassionate towards this world (i.e. who have renounced their link with this artificial and elusive ensnaring world. The holy and divine feet of the Lord are like a ship (or boat) to take one across the ocean of this mundane, deluding, artificial and ensnaring world (48).

गिरिशगिरिसुतामनोनिवासं गिरिवरधारिणमीहिताभिरामम्।
सुरवरदनुजेन्द्रसेविताङ्घ्रिं सुरवरदं रघुनायकं प्रपद्ये।।49।।

giriśagirisutāmanonivāsaṃ girivaradhāriṇamīhitābhirāmam /
suravaradanujendrasevitāṅghriṃ suravaradaṃ raghunāyakaṃ prapadye //

I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Sri Raghunayak (literally, the exalted leader of Raghu's clan; Sri Ram) who resides in the temple-like heart of Lord Shiva and Parvati and is their well-wisher. His character, nature, conduct, behaviour, general demeanours, habits and temperaments, both the worldly as well as the heavenly, are extremely enchanting and pleasant (besides being stellar examples of divinity, holiness, piety, righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics and morality of the highest order). His holy feet are served (worshipped, adored, honoured) both by the most exalted Gods as well as the king of demons. He is that supreme authority that grants boons even to the Gods (49).

परधनपरदारवर्जितानां परगुणभूतिषु तुष्टमानसानाम्।
परहितनिरतात्मनां सुसेव्यं रघुवरमम्बुजलोचनं प्रपद्ये।।50।।

paradhanaparadāravarjitānāṃ paraguṇabhūtiṣu tuṣṭamānasānām /
parahitaniratātmanāṃ susevyaṃ raghuvaramambujalocanaṃ prapadye //

I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of the lotus-eyed Raghubar (Sri Ram) who is being constantly served by those great noble souls who keep far away from (abhor, detest, never think of, or eye) the wealth, property and women of others. On the contrary, they feel very glad, happy and contented at the virtues, excellence,

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goodness, glory, prosperity, well-being and success of others, and are always eager for their welfare and well-being (50).

स्मितरुचिरविकासिताननाब्जमतिसुलभं सुरराजनीलनीलम्।
सितजलरुहचारुनेत्रशोभं रघुपतिमीशगुरोर्गुरुं प्रपद्ये।।51।।

smitaruciravikāsitānanābjamatisulabhaṃ surarājanīlanīlam /
sitajalaruhacārunetraśobhaṃ raghupatimīśagurorguruṃ prapadye //

I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Sri Raghupati (Sri Ram) who is the great Guru (moral preceptor) of Lord Shiva! His charming and attractive face is like a fully blossomed lotus flower and is adorned with a bewitching smile that is most attractive, endearing, genteel and charming for the heart, who is most easily accessible to his devotees, the radiant glow of whose body (i.e. his complexion) is beautifully tinged with a bluish hue like that of the 'Indra Neel Mani' (sapphire worn by Indra), and whose enchanting eyes are as adorable, fascinating, magnificent and charming as a white lotus (51).

हरिकमलजशम्भुरूपभेदात्त्वमिह विभासि गुणत्रयानुवृत्तः।
रविरिव जलपूरितोदपात्रेष्वमरपतिस्तुतिपात्रमीशमीडे।।52।।

harikamalajaśambhurūpabhedāttvamiha vibhāsi guṇātrayānuvṛttaḥ /
raviriva jalapūritodapātreṣvamarapatistutipātramīśamīḍe //

It is you who appear in the three forms of Hari (Vishnu, the sustainer), the one who was born atop a divine lotus (Brahma, the creator), and Shambhu (Shiva, the concluder of creation) due to the predominance of any one of the three 'Gunas' over the others, even as the same sun appears to be different and numerous when it is reflected in a number of pans filled with water. I sing a hymn in your honour who are worthy of being praised, revered and honoured even by Indra (the king of Gods), and are a personification of the supreme transcendental Lord (52).

[Note :—The three 'Gunas' are the inherent qualities and characteristics in a creature that determine its nature, inclinations, temperaments, behaviours and conducts. They have been classified as—'Satva' which is the 1st quality which is positive and characterized by noble virtues and inclinations; 'Raj' is the 2nd quality producing worldly desires and passions; while 'Tama' is the 3rd and lowest quality producing evils, vices, sins, perversions etc. For details, see Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse 22-31.])

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रतिपतिशतकोटिसुन्दराङ्गं शतपथगोचरभावनाविदूरम्।
यतिपतिहृदये सदा विभातं रघुपतिमार्तिहरं प्रभुं प्रपद्ये।। 53।।

ratipatiśatakoṭisundarāṅgaṃ śatapathagocarabhāvanāvidūram /
yatipatihṛdaye sadā vibhātaṃ raghupatimārtiharaṃ prabhuṃ prapadye //

Your divine body is more stunningly and magnificently charming, attractive, handsome, magnificent, radiant and endowed with a divine glow than that of crores (millions) of Kamdeo-cupids (literally the husband of Rati) taken collectively. You are very far away from or inaccessible to those who are confused and perplexed by, or remain entangled in, the web representing pursuit of hundreds of paths or means leading to attainment of emancipation and salvation, instead of concentrating on the righteous and correct path leading to the awareness of your truthful and real form (as described in the Shathpath Brahman of the Shukla Yajur Veda and expounded and elucidated in the Brihad Aranykya Upanishad of that Veda). [That is, you are attainable by realising your true form by following the righteous path of self realisation and devotion as affirmed in the Upanishads.] You are always present and experienced by exalted ascetics in their hearts. I bow most reverentially at the holy and venerated feet of great Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram) who is such a benevolent and unparalleled eliminator of miseries, grief, distress, agonies, troubles and tribulations of all kinds'(53).

इत्येवं स्तुवतस्तस्य प्रसन्नेऽभूद्रघूत्तमः। उवाच गच्छ भद्रं ते मम विष्णोः परं पदम्।। 54।।
शृणोति य इदं स्तोत्रं लिखेद्वा नियतः पठेत्। स याति मम सारूप्यं मरणे मत्स्मृतिं लभेत्।। 55।।

ityevaṃ stuvastasya prasanno'bhūdraghūttamaḥ /
uvāca gaccha bhadraṃ te mama viṣṇoḥ paraṃ padam //
śṛṇoti ya idaṃ stotraṃ likhedvā niyataḥ paṭhet /
sa yāti mama sārūpyaṃ maraṇe matsmṛtiṃ labhet //

When Jatau had prayed in this manner, the most exalted amongst the Raghus (Sri Ram) was pleased with him. and he said, 'Oh Jatau! You be blessed! You go to my supreme abode, the Loka of Vishnu (54). Those persons who listen, write, read or recite this Stotra (devotional hymns) of mine with due concentration of mind, with firm conviction, faith and belief as well as with sincere dedication, attain that stature that makes them as exalted and revered as me (they become one like me), and they get the additional benefit of remembering me at the time of death' (55).

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[Note—This explains why Jatau resembled Vishnu upon death as depicted in verse no.40-43 above. These verses can be called the Gospel according to Jatau.]

इति राघवभाषितं तदा श्रुतवान् हर्षसमाकुलो द्विजः।
रघुनन्दनसाम्यमास्थितः प्रययौ ब्रह्मसुपूजितं पदम्।।56।।

iti rāghavabhāṣitaṃ tadā śrutavān harṣasamākulo dvijaḥ/
raghunandanasāmyamāsthitaḥ prayayau brahmasupūjitaṃ padam//

The elderly and revered one (Jatau) heard these sweet words spoken by Raghav (Sri Ram) with great delight, and thereafter he assumed a form similar to Lord Ram and went to the abode which is worshipped (adored, honoured, respected, lauded) by Brahma himself (because it is the abode of Lord Vishnu) (56).

***

Aranya Kand — Canto 9

Slaying of Kabandh

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

ततो रामो लक्ष्मणेन जगाम विपिनान्तरम्। पुनर्दुःखं समाश्रित्य सीतान्वेषणतत्परः।।1।।
तत्राद्भुतसमाकारो राक्षसः प्रत्यदृश्यत। वक्षस्येव महावक्त्रश्चक्षुरादिविवर्जितः।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tato rāmo lakṣmaṇena jagāma vipināntaram/
punarduḥkhaṃ samāśritya sītānveṣaṇatatparaḥ//
tatrādbhutasamākāro rākṣasaḥ pratyadṛśyata/
vakṣasyeva mahāvaktraścakṣurādivivarjitaḥ//

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Thereafter, Sri Ram resumed his search for Sita and reached another forest (1). There he saw a very strange demon whose chest had a large mouth and he did not have either eyes or ears (2).

बाहू योजनमात्रेण व्यापृतौ तस्य रक्षसः। कबन्धो नाम दैत्येन्द्रः सर्वसत्त्वविहिंसकः।।3।।
तद्बाह्वोर्मध्यदेशे तौ चरन्तौ रामलक्ष्मणौ। ददर्शतुर्महासत्त्वं तद्बाहुपरिवेष्टितौ।।4।।

bāhū yojanamātreṇa vyāpṛtau tasya rakṣasaḥ/
kabandho nāma daityendraḥ sarvasattvavihiṃsakaḥ//

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tadbāhvormadhyadeśe tau carantau rāmalakṣmaṇau /
dadarśaturmahāsattvaṃ tadbāhuparivesṭitau //

The demon's arms were stretched for one Yojan each like tentacles. [1 Yojan = appx. 8 miles]. He was the Lord of ogres and cruel demons, called Kabandh, who was cruel and merciless towards all the creatures (3). Sri Ram and Laxman were encircled by his long arms while they walked on the forest path. Then they sighted that most strong and formidable demon (4).

[Note :—This demon Kabandh resembled a colossus, gigantic spider of the forest, or the octopus found in the deep waters of oceans or seas nowadays, perhaps an amphibious octopus, with the only difference that he could permanently stay on the ground and feed on animals and other forest dwelling creatures.]

रामः प्रोवाच विहसन्पश्य लक्ष्मण राक्षसम्। शिरःपादविहीनोऽयं यस्य वक्षसि चाननम्।। 5।।
बाहुभ्यां लभ्यते यद्यत्तत्तद्भक्षन् स्थितो ध्रुवम्। आवामप्येतयोर्बाह्वोर्मध्ये सङ्कलितौ ध्रुवम्।।6।।
गन्तुमन्यत्र मार्गो न दृश्यते रघुनन्दन। किं कर्तव्यमितोऽस्माभिरिदानीं भक्षयेत्स नौ।। 7।।

rāmaḥ provāca vihasanpaśya lakṣmaṇa rākṣasam /
śiraḥ pādavihīno'yaṃ yasya vakṣasi cānanam //
bāhubhyāṃ labhyate yadyattattadbhakṣan sthito dhruvam /
āvāmapyetayorbāhvormadhye saṅkalitau dhruvam //
gantumanyatra mārgo na dṛśyate raghunandana /
kiṃ kartavyamito'smābhiridānīṃ bhakṣayetsa nau //

Sri Ram laughed and said to Laxman, 'Oh Laxman! Look at this mysterious demon. He is devoid of a head and legs, and his mouth is in his chest (or abdomen) (5). He captures whatever he can with his elongated, tentacle-like arms and eats them to survive. It is sure that we have also got ourselves entangled (trapped) somewhere in the middle of his arms (6). Oh Raghunandan (Laxman)! We do not see (i.e. have) anyway to get out of this snare. What shall we do now? Think fast, otherwise he will soon devour us' (7).

लक्ष्मणस्तमुवाचेदं किं विचारेण राघव। आवामेकैकमव्यग्रौ छिन्द्यावास्य भुजौ ध्रुवम्।। 8।।
तथेति रामः खड्गेन भुजं दक्षिणमच्छिनत्। तथैव लक्ष्मणो वामं चिच्छेद भुजमञ्जसा।। 9।।

lakṣmaṇastamuvācedaṃ kiṃ vicāreṇa rāghava /
āvāmekaikamavyagrau chindyāvāsya bhujau dhruvam //
tatheti rāmaḥ khaḍgena bhujaṃ dakṣiṇamacchinat /
tathaiva lakṣmaṇo vāmaṃ ciccheda bhujamañjasā //

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Laxman replied, 'Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! What much is there to think about? Let us become alert and careful, and immediately cut-off his arms, one arm each' (8). Sri Ram consented, saying 'alright', and sliced off his right arm while Laxman did the same to his left arm (9).

ततोऽतिविस्मितो दैत्यः कौ युवां सुरपुङ्गवौ। मद्बाहुच्छेदकौ लोके दिवि देवेषु वा कुतः॥ 10॥
ततोऽब्रवीद्धसन्नेव रामो राजीवलोचनः। अयोध्याधिपतिः श्रीमान् राजा दशरथो महान्॥ 11॥

tato'tivismito daityaḥ kau yuvāṃ surapuṅgavau/
madbāhucchedakau loke divi deveṣu vā kutaḥ//
tato'bravīddhasanneva rāmo rājīvalocanaḥ/
ayodhyādhipatiḥ śrīmān rājā daśaratho mahān//

Then that giant ogre or demon became bewildered. He said, 'Who are you, oh the youthful and the most exalted ones amongst Gods, who have cut-off my arms? No one is capable, either in this world or among the Gods in the heavens, to do it' (10). At this, the lotus-eyed Sri Ram laughingly (i.e. light-heartedly, almost carelessly, with no sign of fear) replied, 'Sri Dashrath was the king of Ayodhya (11).

रामोऽहं तस्य पुत्रोऽसौ भ्राता मे लक्ष्मणः सुधीः। मम भार्या जनकजा सीता त्रैलोक्यसुन्दरी॥ 12॥
आवां मृगयया यातौ तदा केनापि रक्षसा। नीतां सीतां विचिन्वन्तौ चागतौ घोरकानने॥ 13॥
बाहुभ्यां वेष्टितावत्र तव प्राणरिरक्षया। छिन्नौ तव भुजौ त्वं च को वा विकटरूपधृक्॥ 14॥

rāmo'haṃ tasya putro'sau bhrātā me lakṣmaṇaḥ sudhīḥ/
mama bhāryā janakajā sītā trailokyasundarī//
āvāṃ mṛgayayā yātau tadā kenāpi rakṣasā/
nītāṃ sītāṃ vicinvantau cāgatau ghorakānane//
bāhubhyāṃ veṣṭitāvatra tava prāṇarirakṣayā/
chinnau tava bhujau tvaṃ ca ko vā vikaṭarūpadhṛk//

I am his son 'Ram' and this wise one by my side is my younger brother Laxman, while Sita, who is the most beautiful in the entire Triloki (the three worlds made up of the subterranean, terrestrial and heavenly), is my wife (12). We had gone out to hunt when some demon stole (kidnapped) her. We have come in search of her in this dense, uninhabited and fearful forest (13). No sooner did we enter it than you surrounded (encircled) us by your arms (tentacles). We cut off your arms to save our lives. Now tell us, who are you with this strange and fearful countenance and form?' (14).

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कबन्ध उवाच

धन्योऽहं यदि रामस्त्वमागतोऽसि ममान्तिकम्। पुरा गन्धर्वराजोऽहं रूपयौवनदर्पितः।। 15।।
विचरँल्लोकमखिलं वरनारीमनोहरः। तपसा ब्रह्मणो लब्धमवध्यत्वं रघूत्तम।। 16।।

kabandha uvāca

dhanyo'haṃ yadi rāmastvamāgato'si mamāntikam /
purā gandharvarājo'haṃ rūpayauvanadarpitaḥ //
vicaraṁllokamakhilaṃ varanārīmanoharaḥ /
tapasā brahmaṇo labdhamavadhyatvaṃ raghūttama //

Kabandh (the octopus-shaped giant ogre) replied—'In case you are Sri Ram and have come of your own wish to me, then I am most fortunate, privileged and blessed. In my previous birth, I was a Gandharva (a demigod who is a celestial musician) who was intoxicated and wild with my beauty and youth (15). Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! I had got (the boon of) immortality (i.e. the blessing that I will not be killed or die at the hands of any one) by propitiating Brahma by doing severe penances and austerities (Tapa) to please him. As a result, I use to roam about unhindered and unopposed in the entire universe enticing and luring beautiful women by my glowing and radiant beauty and stunning charm (16).

[Note—A Gandharva is a class of lower rung demigods who lived in the company of celestial damsels, called Apsaras, who danced for the entertainment of the Gods, who guarded the ambrosia of eternity and bliss, called Amrit, who were experts in treating various diseases, who were able to exercise mystical control over women and held them under their spell and charm, who sometimes tormented humans in the guise of some evil spirit, and who were great experts in the art and skill of playing music of all kinds. The word has other connotations also—it refers to those Gods who had the face of a horse or a deer; that Atma which has left one body and acquired another one; a tribe whose are professional singers and whose girls are professional prostitutes; the second husband of a widow who has remarried.]

अष्टावक्रं मुनिं दृष्ट्वा कदाचिदहसं पुरा। क्रुद्धोऽसावाह दुष्ट त्वं राक्षसो भव दुर्मते।। 17।।
अष्टावक्रः पुनः प्राह वन्दितो मे दयापरः। शापस्यान्तं च मे प्राह तपसा द्योतितप्रभः।। 18।।

aṣṭāvakraṃ muniṃ dṛṣṭvā kadācidahasaṃ purā /
kruddho'sāvāha duṣṭa tvaṃ rākṣaso bhava durmate //
aṣṭāvakraḥ punaḥ prāha vandito me dayāparaḥ /
śāpasyāntaṃ ca me prāha tapasā dyotitaprabhaḥ //

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Once, I burst out laughing on seeing sage Ashtavakra (who was bent at eight places in his body, looked oddly funny and walked awkwardly). He became angry and cursed me, 'Oh you evil minded and wicked rascal! You should become a demon!' (17). (When I was scared stiff by the curse and—) When I prayed to him (to remit the effect of the curse), the gracious and kind sage, who was glowing with the mystical powers acquired by his severe austerities and penances, told me how his curse would end (18)—

त्रेतायुगे दाशरथिर्भूत्वा नारायणः स्वयम्। आगमिष्यति ते बाहू छिद्येते योजनायतौ।। 19।।
तेन शापाद्विनिर्मुक्तो भविष्यसि यथा पुरा। इति शप्तोऽहमद्राक्षं राक्षसीं तनुमात्मनः।।20।।

tretāyuge dāśarathirbhūtvā nārāyaṇaḥ svayam /
āgamiṣyati te bāhū chidyete yojanāyatau //
tena śāpādvinirmukto bhaviṣyasi yathā purā /
iti śapto'hamadrākṣaṃ rākṣasīṃ tanumātmanaḥ //

'In the Treta Yug (the 2nd era of the four era celestial cycle of birth and death on this planet earth; the silver era of Hindu mythology), Lord Narayan himself would manifest as an incarnation in the household of Dashrath and he shall come to you. Then he would cut-off your arms which would be of one Yojan in length (19). Then you will be freed of your curse and revert back to your original form (of a Gandharva)'. Being thus cursed by him, I saw myself transformed into a demon (20).

कदाचिद्देवराजानमभ्यादृवमहं रुषा। सोऽपि वज्रेण मां राम शिरोदेशेऽभ्यताडयत्।। 21।।
तदा शिरो गतं कुक्षिं पादौ च रघुनन्दन। ब्रह्मदत्तवरान्मृत्युर्नाभून्मे वज्रताडनात्।। 22।।
मुखाभावे कथं जीवेदयमित्यमराधिपम्। ऊचुः सर्वे दयाविष्टा मां विलोक्यास्यवर्जितम्।।23।।

kadāciddevarājānamabhyādravamahaṃ ruṣā /
so'pi vajreṇa māṃ rāma śirodeśe'bhyatāḍayat //
tadā śiro gataṃ kukṣiṃ pādau ca raghunandana /
brahmadattavarānmṛtyurnābhūnme vajratāḍanāt //
mukhābhāve kathaṃ jīvedayamityamarādhipam /
ūcuḥ sarve dayāviṣṭā māṃ vilokyāsyavarjitam //

Oh Sri Ram! Once, I ran behind Indra angrily, at which he retaliated by hitting me on my head with his Vajra (thunderbolt) (21). Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! By the force (impact) of that Vajra, my head and legs were punched and embedded inside my abdomen, but I did

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not die due to the effects of my earlier boon by Brahma (22). Seeing me without a mouth, all the Gods took pity on me and said to Indra, 'How will he survive without a mouth?' (23).

ततो मां प्राह मघवा जठरे ते मुखं भवेत्। बाहू ते योजनायामौ भविष्यत इतो व्रज।। 24।।
इत्युक्तोऽत्र वसन्नित्यं बाहुभ्यां वनगोचरान्। भक्षयाम्यधुना बाहू खण्डितौ मे त्वयानघ।।25।।

tato māṃ prāha maghavā jaṭhare te mukhaṃ bhavet /
bāhū te yojanāyāmau bhaviṣyata ito vraja //
ityukto'tra vasannityaṃ bāhubhyāṃ vanagocarān /
bhakṣayāmyadhunā bāhū khaṇḍitau me tvayānagha //

Then Indra told me, 'Your abdomen shall have your mouth and your arms will be of one Yojan length (like the tentacles of an octopus or spider). Now go from here' (24). As instructed by Indra, I have been staying here since that time, capturing forest creatures with my long arms, and survive by eating them. Oh Anagh (the pure, sinless, almighty Lord)! You have cut-off those arms now (so how will I survive?) (25).

इतः परं मां श्वभ्रास्ये निक्षिपाग्नीन्धनावृते। अग्निना दह्यमानोऽहं त्वया रघुकुलोत्तम।। 26।।
पूर्वरूपमनुप्राप्य भार्यामार्गं वदामि ते। इत्युक्ते लक्ष्मणेनाशु श्वभ्रं निर्माय तत्र तम्।। 27।।
निक्षिप्य प्रादहत्काष्ठैस्ततो देहात्समुत्थितः। कन्दर्पसदृशाकारः सर्वाभरणभूषितः।। 28।।
रामं प्रदक्षिणं कृत्वा साष्टाङ्गं प्रणिपत्य च। कृताञ्जलिरुवाचेदं भक्तिगद्गदया गिरा।।29।।

itaḥ paraṃ māṃ śvabhrāsye nikṣipāgnīndhanāvṛte /
agninā dahyamāno'haṃ tvayā raghukulottama //
pūrvarūpamanuprāpya bhāryāmārgaṃ vadāmi te /
ityukte lakṣmaṇenāśu śvabhraṃ nirmāya tatra tam //
nikṣipya prādahatkāṣṭhaistato dehātsamutthitaḥ /
kandarpasadṛśākāraḥ sarvābharaṇabhūṣitaḥ //
rāmaṃ pradakṣiṇaṃ kṛtvā sāṣṭāṅgaṃ praṇipatya ca /
kṛtāñjaliruvācedaṃ bhaktigadgadayā girā //

Oh the best in the clan of king Raghu (Sri Ram)! Now push (roll over and put) me into a pit full of firewood and fuel. When I am burnt by you in the fire (i.e. when you would have performed my funeral by lighting the fire and burning my mortal and devilish body of a demon) (26), I shall revert to my original form, and then I shall tell you the whereabouts of your wife'. [Good bargain, indeed.]

When Kabandh had requested so, he (Sri Ram) asked Laxman to

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prepare a big pit, and putting him (Kabandh) into it (27), he burnt him using the firewood collected there (i.e. Sri Ram cremated him). Then out of his body emerged a most beautiful and charming person who resembled Kamdeo-cupid and was adorned by all the decorative ornaments befitting demigods (28). He circumambulated Sri Ram (as a mark of great reverence), prostrated himself before him in veneration, and prayed to him with palms joined together in submission in a voice chocked with emotions (29).

[Note—Kabandh is the other figure with an evil body, besides Jatau, whose last rites were done by the Lord himself. The point to note here is that compared to other demons, Kabandh did not fight at all with the Lord; he was waiting patiently for just this moment of salvation. Refer note of Canto 8, verse no.37-39 in this context.]

गन्धर्व उवाच

स्तोतुमुत्सहते मेऽद्य मनो रामातिसम्भ्रमात्। त्वामनन्तमनाद्यन्तं मनोवाचामगोचरम्।। 30।।

gandharva uvāca

stotumutsahate me'dya mano rāmātisambhramāt /
tvāmanantamanādyantaṃ manovācāmagocaram //

The Kabandh-turned-Gandharva said (prayed) to Sri Ram, 'Oh Sri Ram! Today my mind is very eager to say your prayers in the form of a Stotra (a devotional hymn). You are eternal, without a beginning or end, and are not the subject matter within the reach of the mind or speech (i.e. the mind and intellect cannot fathom you, they cannot comprehend and understand you; similarly the speech cannot define you, it is unable to articulate about you in any way) (30).

सूक्ष्मं ते रूपमव्यक्तं देहद्वयविलक्षणम्। दृग्रूपमितरत्सर्वं दृश्यं जडमनात्मकम्।
तत्कथं त्वां विजानीयाद्व्यतिरिक्तं मनः प्रभो।।31।।

sūkṣmaṃ te rūpamavyaktaṃ dehadvayavilakṣaṇam /
dṛgrūpamitaratsarvaṃ dṛśyaṃ jaḍamanātmakam /
tatkathaṃ tvāṃ vijānīyādvyatiriktaṃ manaḥ prabho //

Oh Lord! Your real/true self (form), encompassing both the subtle and the minute as well as gross and the vast forms of the creation (in the form of Hiranyagarbh and the Viraat respectively), is very strange, mysterious, fascinating, spectacular and wondrous so much so that even the ones who can peer into the minutest of things by their mystical

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powers of deep insight and penetrating intellect (such as the wise and enlightened Yogis or ascetics) are unable to understand and comprehend that form which has no attributes, no name and no form. That glorious form is an embodiment of supreme Gyan (or enlightenment, wisdom, knowledge of the truth, realisation of the hidden truth). Whatever is there except (or besides) you is par se dead, lifeless, inane, meaningless and gross, it is an imaginary sight like a mirage which appears true but is not in reality, and it is 'non-Atma' (that is, not the reality, is not truthful, is not conscious, is not eternal, is not blissful, in short does not posses any of the characters of the Atma). Hence, since the Mana (the mind-intellect-heart complex which governs the thoughts and emotions of a creature) is separate from you as it constitutes the subtle body of a creature—how can it even endeavour to know or comprehend you? (31).

बुद्ध्यात्माभासयोरैक्यं जीव इत्यभिधीयते। बुद्ध्यादि साक्षी ब्रह्मैव तस्मिन्निर्विषयेऽखिलम्॥ 32॥

buddhyātmābhāsayoraikyaṃ jīva ityabhidhīyate/
buddhyādi sākṣī brahmaiva tasminnirviṣaye'khilam//

Jiva (living creature) is the combined form or the resultant product of the intellect interacting with the pure consciousness present in the body of a creature. In other words, the body becomes alive when the subtle body consisting of both the mind-intellect apparatus works in conjunction with the causal body in which the illuminated entity called the pure conscious Atma lives; the existence of a living entity depends on these two (mind-intellect and consciousness) working together. The orchestra played by them creates an entity called a 'Jiva'.

Brahm (the supreme, transcendental, conscious Soul) is the only witness to Buddhi (the mind-intellect complex; the faculty of reasoning and thought) etc. It is not the subject matter to be comprehended, understood or grasped and discussed, debated or articulated by either the mind or the speech respectively (32).

[Note—The mind and intellect are akin to the north and south poles of a magnet, because both work in unison and together they ascribe the magnet its characteristic virtues and qualities. But the value of the magnet is its power to attract which cannot be seen and touched; it can be experienced and witnessed by observing the magnet at work. This inherent power of the magnet is like the Atma, for without this power of attracting iron, the magnet would be useless. Similarly, while the mind and intellect rely on proof, experimentation and logic, the Lord can be experienced in the heart

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of the creature, but he cannot be proved as such by physical touch and sight. The inherent quality of the magnet to attract is on display openly, but if one tries to break that piece of magnet open and see where the hidden power is, he is a fool of the highest order. Likewise, a Jiva or a living entity shows all the signs of life and powers to act intelligently, but the authority to do so comes from the Brahm present in its bosom as its pure consciousness Atma. In this example, the magnet is the gross body of the creature, the north and the south poles are the mind and intellect, while the powers to attract iron inherent in the magnet is the Atma.]

आरोप्यतेऽज्ञानवशान्निर्विकारेऽखिलात्मनि। हिरण्यगर्भस्ते सूक्ष्मं देहं स्थूलं विराट् स्मृतम्।। 33।।

āropyate'jñānavaśānnirvikāre'khilātmani /
hiraṇyagarbhaste sūkṣmaṃ dehaṃ sthūlaṃ virāṭ smṛtam //

Due to ignorance and lack of correct and truthful knowledge, this whole animate as well as inanimate world is imposed on him who is faultless, eternal and changeless as well as without any form, name and attributes. He is the supreme Soul of the creation that is all pervading and all encompassing. Your subtle, minute, macrocosmic form is called Hiranyagarbh, while your gross macrocosmic form is called Viraat (33).

[Note :—A separate appendix no.2 explains these basic concepts of Vedant nad metaphysics in simple terms. Briefly, when the creation began to take shape, the cosmic egg that was formed was called Hiranyagarbh. When the cosmic body developed and emerged from it upon its maturity, it was called Viraat, literally meaning huge, colossus, vast and all enveloping. From this Viraat emerged the rest of the creation just like branches of a tree branch out from a single stem called its trunk. The creation resembled its parent to the dot, even as the branches of a tree replicate the main tree complete with its side branches and tender leaves. The Hiranyagarbh and Viraat were the macro level of the body of Brahm, while the visible creation was its micro counterpart. The Brahm itself was like the Atma or soul of the creature. Without the soul no one survives, and so no creation has any existence without Brahm. The process of evolution of the creation from Brahm has been extensively described in various Upanishads.]

भावनाविषयो राम सूक्ष्मं ते ध्यातृमङ्गलम्। भूतं भव्यं भविष्यच्च यत्रेदं दृश्यते जगत्।। 34।।

bhāvanāviṣayo rāma sūkṣmaṃ te dhyātṛmaṅgalam /
bhūtaṃ bhavyaṃ bhaviṣyacca yatredaṃ dṛśyate jagat //

Your subtle, ethereal, sublime, esoteric and minute form— which is inherent in one's heart as 'consciousness' can only be experienced

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by deeply concentrating upon it as during meditation and contemplation. This form subtly and imperceptibly resides in the heart of a creature as its Atma. Awareness of this ethereal form empowers the person with mystical powers so that he can reflect about the past, present and future of the existence. This realisation can nevertheless provide auspiciousness and welfare to those who meditate and contemplate upon you. [In other words, those who try to visualise or concentrate upon you in their hearts get all the benefits arising out of 'actual' realisation. Such persons become aware of the past, the present and the future of this existence.] (3)

स्थूलेऽण्डकोशे देहे ते महदादिभिरावृते। सप्तभिरुत्तरगुणैर्वैराजो धारणाश्रयः।। 35।।
त्वमेव सर्वकैवल्यं लोकास्तेऽवयवाः स्मृताः। पातालं ते पादमूलं पार्ष्णिस्तव महातलम्।। 36।।

sthūle'ṇḍakośe dehe te mahadādibhirāvṛte /
saptabhiruttaraguṇairvairājo dhāraṇāśrayaḥ //
tvameva sarvakaivalyaṃ lokāste'vayavāḥ smṛtāḥ /
pātālaṃ te pādamūlaṃ pārṣṇistava mahātalam //

[Kabandh now describes both the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic form of the supreme Lord from whom the whole creation has evolved.] Your cosmic gross body called the Viraat evolved from the cosmic egg (called Hiranyagarbh, which represented the cosmic subtle body), which had seven basic elements surrounding its core (Brahm, represented by the cosmic causal body in which was ensconced the conscious Soul) in the form of seven subtle layers. These seven were the fundamentals elements created at the beginning of creation and which formed the basic ingredients that, in various permutations and combinations, formed the entire cosmos as it is known today. Therefore, the whole world is conceptualized and visualised in your Viraat form; it is believed firmly with conviction that the Viraat is inherently and integrally present in your body, because it is from you that he ultimately evolved (35).

You are the only one the attainment of whom is called 'Moksha' (i.e. liberation and deliverance of the soul from the cycle of transmigration, which leads to its final emancipation and salvation. All the various Lokas (worlds) are but your fractional parts; they are only one or the other part of your vast colossus form represented by Viraat. The 'Patal' (the nether world) is the sole of your feet; the 'Mahatal' (the 5th region under the surface of the eath) is your heel (36).

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[Note :—(i) According to Sankhya Shastra and the Purans, Brahma, who is known as 'Swayambhu' (self created in the sense that he had no father or ancestor) created seven elements called 'Vyahriti', viz. Bhuh, Buhvaha, Swaha, Mahaha, Janaha, Tapaha and Satyam respectively which constitute the fundamental elements which formed the gross body of the creation as its core building blocks at the macro level. Encircling this core is the rounded globe called 'earth' which is surrounded by concentric circles constituting of 'water', 'energy' called 'Tej', 'wind or air', 'sky or space', the notions that are described as 'pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness and vanity' collectively called 'Ahankar', and the notions of 'importance, majesty, grandeour, magnificence and lordliness' called collectively as 'Mahattatva'. Each of them was 10 times larger than its preceding layer or circle.

The word 'Dharna-sraya' simply means to have certain beliefs that form the base for all thoughts and emotions. It is to concentrate on anything or believing and having faith in any concept by making the mind stable and grouted in a set of convictions, without getting confused or embroiled in debates, diversionary and confusing discussions as well as myriad schools of thought and paths. So, put in a simple language, verse no. 35 means this—the world consists of five elements—earth, water, energy (fire), wind (air), sky (space) combined in different permutations and combinations. A wise person is one who does not get distracted or confused by the various myriad shapes this combination produces or presents before the eye of the beholder, but instead he tries to see the basic elements as being one and the same in this vast diverse universe. And since all the creatures are products of these fundamentals consisting of these five elements, which in turn were produced by a single entity called Brahm, the other name of whom is the Atma or soul, there is no difference between the creature and the cosmos. The egg from which the individual creature is born is an exact replica of the cosmic egg from which the whole cosmos evolved. The Brahm of the cosmos is the Atma of the individual creature; conversely, the microcosmic soul of the creature is the same as the macrocosmic soul of the universe. The consciousness which is the 'essential principal' supporting an individual in the microcosmic form (Viswa + Taijasa + Pragna) is the same as the one which pervades the universe in macrocosmic form (Viraat + Hirnyagarbh + Eswara) respectively. Please also refer to Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse no.47 for further clarification.

(ii) A separate appendix no.2 of this book helps to explain these basic concepts of Vedanta in simple terms. A diagrammatic representation of the concepts in verse nos. 35-36 is appended at the end of this appendix.]

रसातलं ते गुल्फौ तु तलातलमितीर्यते। जानुनी सुतलं राम ऊरू ते वितलं तथा।। 37।।
अतलं च मही राम जघनं नाभिगं नभः। उरःस्थलं ते ज्योतींषि ग्रीवा ते मह उच्यते।।38।।

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rasātalaṃ te gulphau tu talātalamitīryate /
jānunī sutalaṃ rāma ūrū te vitalaṃ tathā //
atalaṃ ca mahī rāma jaghanaṃ nābhigaṃ nabhaḥ /
uraḥsthalaṃ te jyotīṃṣi grīvā te maha ucyate //

Oh Sri Ram! The 'Rasatal' (the 6th lower world; hell, the Hades; the underworld) is your ankle joint, the 'Talatal' (the 5th layer which is filled with molten plasma) is your knee joint, the 'Sutal' (the 4th layer forming the rocks etc) is your thigh, and the 'Veetal' (the 3rd strata of the earth's crust) represents your two large buttocks (37). 'Atal' and earth (the 2nd and 1st upper crusts respectively) are your two pelvic girdles (or the waist area), the 'Bhurlok' (the empty space, sky above the surface of the earth stretching upto the upper layers of the earth's atmosphere) is your navel, the brilliant 'Swarlok' (the divine heaven or abode of Gods represented by the vast space of the solar system lighted by the splendorous sum) is your chest region, while the 'Maharlok' (the great Loka where the great and exalted saints, sages, ascetics and other exalted ones reside in the upper heavens) is your neck (38).

[Note :—A diagrammatic representation of the Viraat Purush is appended to appendix no.2 at the end of this book.]

वदनं जनलोकस्ते तपस्ते शङ्खदेशगम्। सत्यलोको रघुश्रेष्ठ शीर्षण्यास्ते सदा प्रभो।। 39।।
इन्द्रादयो लोकपाला बाहवस्ते दिशः श्रुती। अश्विनौ नासिके राम वक्त्रं तेऽग्निरुदाहृतः।।40।।

vadanaṃ janalokaste tapaste śaṅkhadeśagam /
satyaloko raghuśreṣṭha śīrṣaṇyāste sadā prabho //
indrādayo lokapālā bāhavaste diśaḥ śrutī /
aśvinau nāsike rāma vaktraṃ te'gnirudāhṛtaḥ //

Oh Lord who is the most exalted in king Raghu's clan (i.e. Sri Ram)! The 'Janlok' (the world inhabited by, or consisting of, ordinary living beings) is your face, the 'Tapalok' (the world where people who do severe Tapa or austerities and penances reside) is your forehead, while the 'Satyalok' (the salvation providing truthful abode of Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord, and from where there is no return) is your head (crown) (39). Oh Sri Ram! Indra and other Lokpals (custodians of the world) are your arms, the different 'directions' are your ears, and the two Ashwini Kumars are the two nostrils, while the 'fire' has been called your mouth (40).

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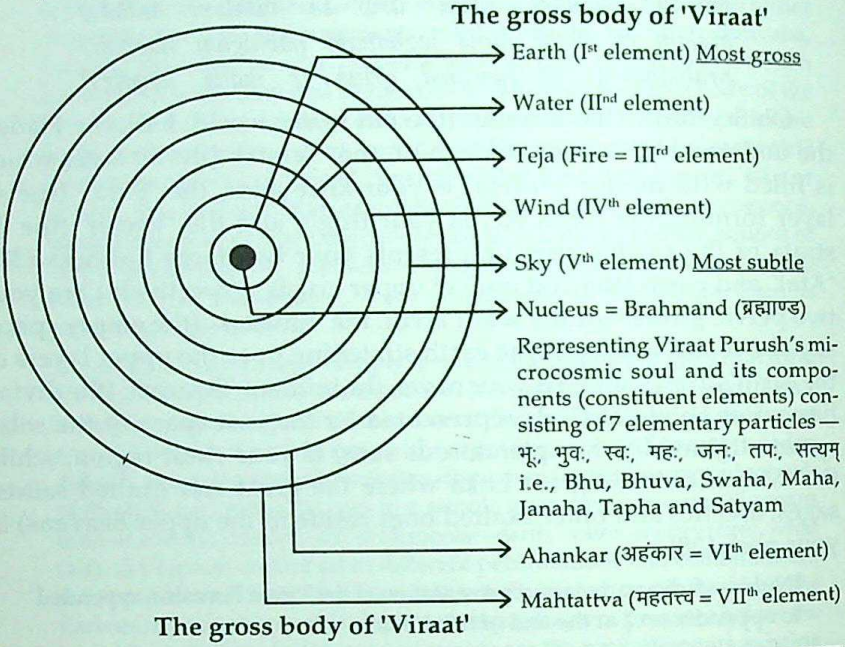
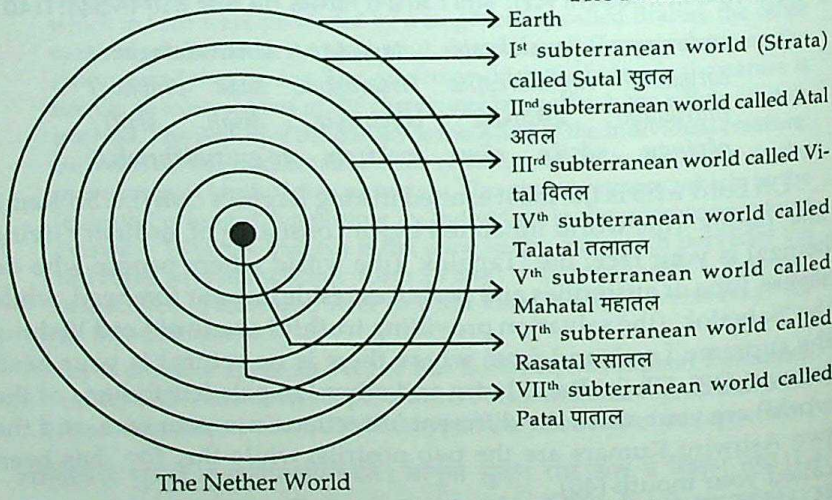
Aranya Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 35



Aranya Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 36-38



The earth has 7 subterranean worlds (or nether worlds)

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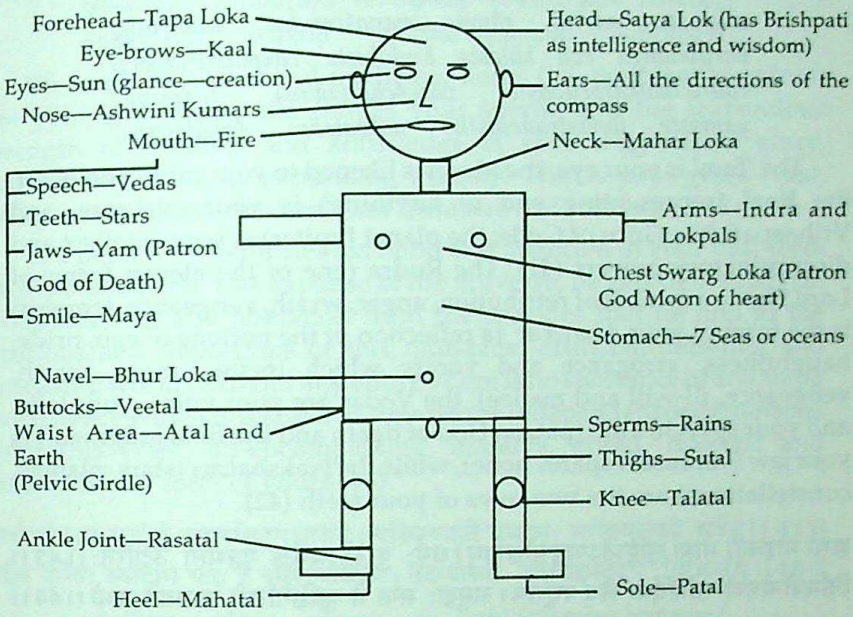
Aranya Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 36-45 (also see Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse 63-69).

The Viraat Purush



Note :— (a) Eyes (Sun) = (i) Glances—Creation; (ii) Blink—Night; (iii) Open—Day
(b) Body Hairs = Trees, Medicinal herbs, Creepers
(d) Enlightenment/Wisdom/Knowledge = Glory, Fame, Renown

[Note :—Goswami Tulsidas has described the Viraat Purush form (Macrocosmic form) of Sri Ram in exactly similar terms in his epic Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha 14 to 15A, Chaupai 1-7 as follows : —

दो.-बिस्वरूप रघुबंस मनि करहु बचन बिस्वासु।
लोक कल्पना बेद कर अंग अंग प्रति जासु।।14।।

पद पाताल सीस अज धामा। अपर लोक अँग अँग बिश्रामा।।
भृकुटि बिलास भयंकार काला। नयन दिवाकर कच घन माला।।
जासु घ्रान अस्विनीकुमारा। निसि अरु दिवस निमेष अपारा।।
श्रवन दिसा दस बेद बखानी। मारुत स्वास निगम निज बानी।।
अधर लोभ जम दसन कराला। माया हास बाहु दिगपाला।।
आनन अनल अंबुपति जीहा। उतपति पालन प्रलय समीहा।।
रोम राजि अष्टदस भारा। अस्थि सैल सरिता नस जारा।।
उदर उदधि अधगो जतना। जगमय प्रभु का बहु कलपना।।

दो.-अहंकार सिव बुद्धि अज मन ससि चित्त महान।
मनुज बास सचराचर रूप राम भगवान।।15 (क)।।

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चक्षुस्ते सविता राम मनश्चन्द्र उदाहृतः। भ्रूभङ्ग एव कालस्ते बुद्धिस्ते वाक्पतिर्भवेत्।। 41।।
रुद्रोऽहङ्कारूपस्ते वाचश्छन्दांसि तेऽव्यय। यमस्ते दंष्ट्रदेशस्थो नक्षत्राणि द्विजालयः।।42।।

cakṣuste savitā rāma manaścandra udāhṛtaḥ/
bhrūbhaṅga eva kālaste buddhiste vākpatirbhavet//
rudro'haṅkārarūpaste vācaśchandāṁsi te'vyaya/
yamaste daṁṣṭradeśastho nakṣatrāṇi dvijālayaḥ//

The 'Sun' is your eye, the Moon is likened to your mind and heart, the Kaal (representing end of anything) is your eyebrow, and Vrihaspati (the Guru of Gods; the planet Jupiter) is your intellect and discriminatory powers (41). The Rudra (one of the eleven forms of Lord Shiva; a symbol of retribution, anger, wrath, vengeance, tempest) is the form of your Ahankar (a reflection of the notions of ego, pride, haughtiness, arrogance and vanity which incites anger, wrath, vengeance, ill-will and malice), the Vedas are your voice, your talks and your speech, Yam (patron God of death and the final judgment) is your jaw (because it spares none), while the Nakshatras (stars, planets, constellations) are the two rows of your teeth (42).

हासो मोहकरी माया सृष्टिस्तेऽपाङ्गमोक्षणम्। धर्मः पुरस्तेऽधर्मश्च पृष्ठभाग उदीरितः।।43।।
निमिषोन्मेषणे रात्रिर्दिवा चैव रघूत्तम। समुद्राः सप्त ते कुक्षिर्नाड्यो नद्यस्तव प्रभो।।44।।

hāso mohakarī māyā sṛṣṭiste'pāṅgamokṣaṇam/
dharmaḥ puraste'dharmaśca pṛṣṭhabhāga udīritaḥ//
nimiṣonmeṣaṇe rātrirdivā caiva raghūttama/
samudrāḥ sapta te kukṣirnāḍyo nadyastava prabho//

Maya (your magnificently stupendous deluding powers), which enchants and captivates all in its magical spell, is your sweet, bewitching, charming and enchanting smile that stuns and hypnotizes everyone; the creation, both the animate as well as the inanimate, is your side ways, oblique, askance glance; Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct) is your fore (front) part, while Adharama (the reverse of Dharma) is your hind (back, rear) part (43).

Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! Night and day are like the blinks of your eyes. Oh Lord! The seven seas are your stomach or abdomen, while the rivers are your veins and nerves (44).

रोमाणि वृक्षौषधयो रेतो वृष्टिस्तव प्रभो। महिमा ज्ञानशक्तिस्ते एवं स्थूलं वपुस्तव।।45।।
यदस्मिन् स्थूलरूपे ते मनः सन्धार्यते नरैः। अनायासेन मुक्तिः स्यादतोऽन्यन्नहि किञ्चन।।46।।

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romāṇi vṛkṣauṣadhayo reto vṛṣṭistava prabho /
mahimā jñānaśaktiste evaṃ sthūlaṃ vapustava //
yadasmin sthūlarūpe te manaḥ sandhāryate naraiḥ /
anāyāsena muktiḥ syādato'nyannahi kiñcana //

Oh Lord! The trees and medicinal herbs (i.e. the plant kingdom) are your body-hairs, the rain is your sperm, and the stupendous strength of wisdom and knowledge is your magnificent glory, marvelous fame and astounding majesty. This is your gross (vast, bulky, massive, macrocosmic, all inclusive and colossus) body (45).

If a person concentrates his mind and attention in your vast form incorporating this vast expanse of the universe, he gets delivered (i.e. finds freedom and liberation from the shackles that tie him to the illusions and limitations of this mundane, artificial, deluding and ensnaring world) without any effort. There is no substance or any thing in existence which is distinct or separate or independent or extraneous from this (vast, all-encompassing, massive, grand, majestic and macrocosmic) form of yours (46).

अतोऽहं राम रूपं ते स्थूलमेवानुभावये। यस्मिन्ध्याते प्रेमरसः सरोमपुलको भवेत्।। 47।।
तदैव मुक्तिः स्याद्राम यदा ते स्थूलभावकः। तदप्यास्तां तवैवाहमेतद्रूपं विचिन्तये।।48।।

ato'haṃ rāma rūpaṃ te sthūlamevānubhāvaye /
yasmindhyāte premarasaḥ saromapulako bhavet //
tadaiva muktiḥ syādrāma yadā te sthūlabhāvakaḥ /
tadapyāstāṃ tavevāhametadrūpaṃ vicintaye //

Hence, oh Sri Ram, I always remember and concentrate my attention upon that vast, all-inclusive and macrocosmic form of yours, the mere remembrance of which thrills the body, and the nectar of devotional affection surges in the heart (47). When any Jiva (living creature) remembers or concentrates upon this Viraat form of yours, he gets instant liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation. [Here meaning that this realisation provides enlightenment and wisdom to the person about your divine, ethereal, all-encompassing form as described by the Vedas and the Upanishads, and this realisation fills him with great devotion for you, which in turn paves for his liberation from the fetters that limit him to this transient, deluding, illusionary and mundane world and provides emancipation and ultimate salvation for his soul. Such a person is called a 'Gyani' or the realised and enlightened one'.]

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Inspite of this fact, I do not have the need of it (and I do not wish to become a Gyani as such). Instead, I would prefer to concentrate on your divine form in the way I behold it now in your present form as Ram who is standing personally in front of me (i.e. your Sagun form) (48).

[Note :—By saying that the creature is freed from this illusionary, transient, ensnaring and mundane world it is meant that the creature realises that the Lord's creation is very vast, myriad and beyond his imagination. Compared to its expanse, he is only a speck of sand particle on a desert or sea-beach. All his pride, ego and haughtiness of being important vanish. This removes the very cause of all ills and fills the creature with humility, peace and contentedness. This frees him from indulging passionately in this world thinking that he belongs to it and vice versa; it ends the false notion that the world is the real thing and he is the Lord of it; he stops pursuing the comforts of this world, yearning for more, fighting to retain lordship over his acquisitions and generally involving himself in myriad of deeds that tie him to the never ending web of illusive pursuits—in short, the whole vicious chain is snapped, and the creature is freed from its shackles. Further, this shackle is all in the mind of the creature—there are no physical compulsions on him to remain tied. So, once the mind is freed from delusions and false impressions about the world, the rest takes care of itself.

Now, Kabandh is evidently a scholarly, learned person well steeped in the principles of Vedanta because it is not easy to visualize the Lord in his Viraat form so typical of the philosophy expounded by the Upanishads and Purans. But as is the general wont of devotees of Sri Ram, he prefers to concentrate/focus his attention on the 'Sagun' aspect of the Lord which deals with his formed form with divine attributes, rather than his 'Nirgun' form which is very abstract and difficult to comprehend. This is clear from the last stanza of verse no. 48.]

धनुर्बाणधरं श्यामं जटावल्कलभूषितम्। अपीच्यवयसं सीतां विचिन्वन्तं सलक्ष्मणम्॥ 49॥
इदमेव सदा मे स्यान्मानसे रघुनन्दन। सर्वज्ञः शङ्करः साक्षात्पार्वत्या सहितः सदा॥ 50॥
त्वद्रूपमेवं सततं ध्यायन्नास्ते रघूत्तम। मुमूर्षूणां तदा काश्यां तारकं ब्रह्मवाचकम्॥ 51॥
रामरामेत्युपदिशन्सदा सन्तुष्टमानसः। अतस्त्वं जानकीनाथ परमात्मा सुनिश्चितः॥ 52॥

dhanurbāṇadharaṃ śyāmaṃ jaṭāvalkalabhūṣitam /
apīcyavayasaṃ sītāṃ vicinvantaṃ salakṣmaṇam //
idameva sadā me syānmānase raghunandana /
sarvajñaḥ śaṅkaraḥ sākṣātpārvatyā sahitaḥ sadā //
tvadrūpamevaṃ satataṃ dhyāyannāste raghūttama /
mumūrṣūṇāṃ tadā kāśyāṃ tārakaṃ brahmavācakam //

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rāmarāmetyupadiśansadā santuṣṭamānasaḥ /
atastvaṃ jānakīnātha paramātmā suniścitaḥ //

It is my earnest prayer that this visible divine form of yours holding a bow and arrow, dark complexioned, adorned with matted lock of hairs and clothes made of birch, of a youthful body as an young adult, and going out with Laxman in search of Sita (49), oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram), should always reside (remain enshrined) in my heart.

Oh the most exalted one in the clan of king Raghu (Sri Ram)! The wise and omniscient Lord Shiva along with Parvati (50) always concentrates and meditates upon, remembers and thinks about, and remains engrossed in this divine, radiant, marvelous and majestic form of yours. He perennially and constantly preaches the unique emancipation and salvation providing divine Mantra called 'Tarak'—which consists of your divine name 'Ram' and which is synonymous with and equivalent to Brahm (the supreme Soul of the creation; the pure consciousness of the creation that is the ultimate Truth and the absolute Reality in creation; the supreme transcendental Lord God) —to those dying at Kashi (Varanasi) to provide them with easy means of salvation (51). While doing so, he always remains contented in his heart, as well as submerged and intoxicated mentally in supreme and undiluted bliss, happiness, peace and tranquility obtained by constantly remembering you and having devotion for you. Hence, oh the Lord of Janki, you are verily the Parmatma (supreme Soul, the supreme transcendental Lord) himself (52).

[Note—The Tarak Mantra of the Lord is elaborately described in Ramottartaponishad of the Atharva Veda tradition which is exclusively dedicated to Lord Ram, as well as in Tarak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition which is dedicated to the subject of emancipation and salvation. The Tarak Mantra preached by Lord Shiva is that group of esoteric, ethereal and holy words, syllables or phrases that have stupendous magical and divine powers that can achieve miracles, and one of them is the ability to give liberation and deliverance to even sinful creatures who can never expect to find emancipation themselves. It gives freedom from miseries, fears, torments and other misfortunes that devour a creature. It liberates a creature from the cycle of birth and death, the miseries and fears associated with this world, with old age, death and their accompanying horrors etc. (Atharva-shikhar Upanishad,2/1,49; Advai-tarak Upanishad, 3; and Jabal Upanishad, canto 1. The ascetic/ Yogi achieves liberation and deliverance by concentrating his internal thoughts at a point between the eyebrows where he realises the supreme,

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transcendental existence of Brahm, and he mentally one with Brahm after this realisation (Advai-tarak-2,3). According to Ramottartaponishad, the divine emancipation and salvation providing Mantra is 'OM RANG RAMAYE NAMAHE' (Ramottartaponishad, 2/3). Atharva-shikhar Upanishad, 44 says that 'OM' is that Tarak Mantra.

The pilgrim site of Kashi is called the 'Avimukta Kshetra', which means a special place endowed with mystical powers that provide Mukti or liberation and deliverance to a person who dies there. This has also been dealt with in great detail in the above referred Upanishads. The concept of Mantras and their powers to provide Mukti have been discussed in detail in appendix no.2 of this book at the end.]

सर्वे ते मायया मूढास्त्वां न जानन्ति तत्त्वतः। नमस्ते रामभद्राय वेधसे परमात्मने।।53।।
अयोध्याधिपते तुभ्यं नमः सौमित्रिसेवित। त्राहि त्राहि जगन्नाथ मां माया नावृणोतु ते।।54।।

sarve te māyayā mūḍhāstvāṃ na jānanti tattvataḥ/
namaste rāmabhadrāya vedhase paramātmane//
ayodhyādhipate tubhyaṃ namaḥ saumitrisevita/
trāhi trāhi jagannātha māṃ māyā nāvṛṇotu te//

Your actual, real, essential and truthful nature and form is not easily known, understood, comprehended, grasped or realised by all because they are enchanted, captivated, entangled, deluded and held under the magical spell by your delusion creating powers called Maya.

Oh the honourable Parmatma (supreme, cosmic, universal Soul) Sri Ram who is the creator of the world (universe, cosmos, the entire creation)! I bow most reverentially before you (53).

Oh the Lord of Ayodhya who is served by the son of Sumitra (i.e. Laxman)! I most reverentially bow before you. Oh Jagannath (i.e. the Lord of the universe)! Save me, save me! Let your Maya not cast its deluding spell or shadow on me (i.e. let me be free from its evil effects so that I can observe and realise the absolute truth about you)' (54).

श्रीराम उवाच

तुष्टोऽहं देवगन्धर्व भक्त्या स्तुत्या च तेऽनघ। याहि मे परमं स्थानं योगिगम्यं सनातनम्।।55।।
जपन्ति ये नित्यमनन्यबुद्ध्या भक्त्या त्वदुक्तं स्तवमागमोक्तम्।
तेऽज्ञानसम्भूतभवं विहाय मां यान्ति नित्यानुभवानुमेयम्।।56।।

śrīrāma uvāca

tuṣṭo'haṃ devagandharva bhaktyā stutyā ca te'nagha/
yāhi me paramaṃ sthānaṃ yogigamyaṃ sanātanam//

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japanti ye nityamananyabuddhyā bhaktyā tvaduktaṃ stavamāgamoktam /
te'jñānasambhūtabhavaṃ vihāya māṃ yānti nityānubhavānumeyam //

Sri Ram replied—'Oh celestial Gandharva! I am highly pleased by your devotion and prayers. Oh Anagh (sinless, pure, faultless one)! You go to my 'Sanatan' abode (the eternal, truthful and supreme abode of the Lord) which is attained by worthy ascetics only (55).

Those people who would daily repeat these prayerful hymns or Stotras that you have said in my honour—Stotras which empower a person to achieve liberation and deliverance—with deep and sincere conviction, faith, belief and devotion, shall finally attain (achieve) liberation from this world having its roots in ignorance (or which is fostered by ignorance). They would be able to do their designated assigned deeds in this world as mandated by their destiny, and employ it as a means of attaining my eternal supreme form, which is an embodiment of wisdom and enlightenment, at the end of their term (i.e. upon death) (56).

[Note—It is to be noted here that the prayers offered by Kabandh are not ordinary prayers, for they are highly steeped in the philosophy of the Upanishads. A person who reads it daily is sure to be influenced by the great tenets expounded in it. Such a person would be deemed to be wise and learned because lesser mortals would get bored by the philosophy elucidated in the Strotra. Such a person would have understood the essential teachings of the Upanishads, and therefore become eligible for emancipation and salvation obtained by the sprouting of truthful enlightenment and wisdom. Such realisation of the ultimate truth will inculcate renunciation and detachment towards this illusionary world in him; he would continue to do his work, but do it with a sense of detachment which comes with wisdom and realisation of the falsehood of the world, its perishable nature, the futility of pursuing it, and the eternity and truthfulness of the soul in its comarision. He would treat all work as an offering to his Lord and done as his service. This would be tantamount to becoming liberated and freed from the fetters of the world that shackle a person to it, which in turn means emancipation and salvation of the soul from remaining entangled permanently in the web of worldly engagements. Since darkness and light are inimical to each other, only such people who have become realised and enlightened can ever hope to reach the Lord, because he is a fount of light of enlightenment, and no darkness of ignorance can ever exist there.

These hymns of Kabandh can be called the gospel according to Kabandh.]

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Aranya Kand — Canto 10

Sri Ram's meeting with Shabari

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

लब्ध्वा वरं स गन्धर्वः प्रयास्यन् राममब्रवीत्। शबर्यास्ते पूरोभागे आश्रमे रघुनन्दन।।1।।
भक्त्या त्वत्पादकमले भक्तिमार्गविशारदा। तां प्रयाहि महाभाग सर्वं ते कथयिष्यति।।2।।
इत्युक्त्वा प्रययौ सोऽपि विमानेनार्कवर्चसा। विष्णोः पदं रामनामस्मरणे फलमीदृशम्।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

labdhvā varaṃ sa gandharvaḥ prayāsyan rāmamabravīt /
śabaryāste purobhāge āśrame raghunandana //
bhaktyā tvatpādakamale bhaktimārgaviśāradā /
tāṃ prayāhi mahābhāga sarvaṃ te kathayiṣyati //
ityuktvā prayayau so'pi vimānenārkavarcasā /
viṣṇoḥ padaṃ rāmanāmasmaraṇe phalamīdṛśam //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! After having received the requisite blessings and while going to heaven, that Gandharva (Kabandh; see Canto 9) said, 'Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Shabari lives in a hermitage in the yonder (1). Since she has great affection for your holy lotus-feet, she is considered an expert and well-versed in the path of Bhakti. Oh the most fortunate and exalted one! Please pay her a visit. She will tell you everything about Sita' (2). Saying this, the Gandharva boarded a chariot as splendorous as the sun and went to the abode of Vishnu. Verily, this is indeed the majestic and magnificent reward of remembering the holy name of Sri Ram (3).

[Note—The concept of Bhakti has a very broad sweep, and it incorporates such glorious virtues as having, inter alia, sincere devotion and firm faith in the Lord, total submission and surrender before the Lord, having unwavering faith, conviction, belief and dedication for the Lord, having no other solace, succour, hope and respite except the Lord, treating oneself as a humble servant of the Lord, remembering the Lord at all times and offering each and every deed and action to the Lord, remaining unruffled and calm under all circumstances with the view that these are the wishes of the Lord and one has no right to get overly excited over them. A detailed note has been added on the subject of Bhakti to verse no.29-31 of this canto below.]

त्यक्त्वा तद्विपिनं घोरं सिंहव्याघ्रादिदूषितम्। शनैरथाश्रमपदं शबर्या रघुनन्दनः।।4।।

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शबरी राममालोक्य लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितम्। आयान्तमाराद्धर्षेण प्रत्युत्थायाचिरेण सा।। 5।।
पतित्वा पादयोरग्रे हर्षपूर्णाश्रुलोचना। स्वागतेनाभिनन्द्याथ स्वासने संन्यवेशयत्।। 6।।

tyaktvā tadvipinaṃ ghoraṃ siṁhavyāghrādidūṣitam /
śanairathāśramapadaṃ śabaryā raghunandanaḥ //
śabarī rāmamālokya lakṣmaṇena samanvitam /
āyāntamārāddharṣeṇa pratyutthāyācireṇa sā //
patitvā pādayorāgre harṣapūrṇāśrulocanā /
svāgatenābhinandyātha svāsane saṁnyaveśayat //

Thence, leaving behind that wild forest infested with fierce lions, tigers etc., Raghunandan (Sri Ram) slowly wended his way to reach the hermitage of Shabari (4). Seeing Sri Ram and Laxman coming near, Shabari stood up instantly with great delight and ecstasy (5). Her eyes welled up with tears of joy and happiness, and she fell down at the holy feet of Sri Ram. She welcomed him, asked about his well-being, and after that seated him on a comfortable seat (6).

रामलक्ष्मणयोः सम्यक्पादौ प्रक्षाल्य भक्तितः। तज्जलेनाभिषिच्याङ्गमथार्घ्यादिभिरादृता।। 7।।
सम्पूज्य विधिवद्रामं ससौमित्रिं सपर्यया। सङ्गृहीतानि दिव्यानि रामार्थं शबरी मुदा।। 8।।
फलान्यमृतकल्पानि ददौ रामाय भक्तितः। पादौ सम्पूज्य कुसुमैः सुगन्धैः सानुलेपनैः।। 9।।

rāmalakṣmaṇayoḥ samyakpādau prakṣālya bhaktitaḥ /
tajjalenābhiṣicyāṅgamathārghyādibhirādṛtā //
sampūjya vidhivadrāmaṃ sasaumitriṃ saparyayā /
saṅgṛhītāni divyāni rāmārthaṃ śabarī mudā //
phalānyamṛtakalpāni dadau rāmāya bhaktitaḥ /
pādau sampūjya kusumaiḥ sugandhaiḥ sānulepanaiḥ //

Then she properly, according to established traditions, washed the holy feet of Sri Ram and Laxman with due devotion, sprinkled the water on her body (to purify it), worshipped Sri Ram and Laxman according to established norms, and most happily and delightedly brought the nectar-like divine (i.e. sweet, succulent) fruits that she had been collecting for him expressly for this moment, and offered them to him with full devotion and affection. She worshipped his lotus-like feet with flowers having the fragrance of sandalwood (7-9).

कृतातिथ्यं रघुश्रेष्ठमुपविष्टं सहानुजम्। शबरी भक्तिसम्पन्ना प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यमब्रवीत्।। 10।।
अत्राश्रमे रघुश्रेष्ठ गुरवो मे महर्षयः। स्थिताः शुश्रूषणं तेषां कुर्वती समुपस्थिता।। 11।।
बहुवर्षसहस्राणि गतास्ते ब्रह्मणः पदम्। गमिष्यन्तोऽब्रुवन्मां त्वं वसात्रैव समाहिता।। 12।।

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kṛtātithyaṃ raghuśreṣṭhamupaviṣṭaṃ sahānujam /
śabarī bhaktisampannā prāñjalirvākyamabravīt //
atrāśrame raghuśreṣṭha guravo me maharṣayaḥ /
sthitāḥ śuśrūṣaṇaṃ teṣāṃ kurvatī samupasthitā //
bahuvarṣasahasrāṇi gatāste brahmaṇaḥ padam /
gamiṣyanto'bruvanmāṃ tvaṃ vasātraiva samāhitā //

When the formalities of welcoming a guest were over and the most exalted ones in Raghu's clan (i.e. Sri Ram and Laxman) were comfortably seated, Shabari said with palms joined together in submission (10)—'Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! Earlier, my Guru, the great sage (Matang) used to stay in this hermitage. I stayed here for thousands of years serving him. Now that exalted great sage has gone to the Brahmaloka (has died). At the time of his departure he had instructed me to fix my mind (i.e. concentrate it and prevent it from wavering and wandering) and stay here (11-12).

रामो दाशरथिर्जातः परमात्मा सनातनः। राक्षसानां वधार्थाय ऋषीणां रक्षणाय च।। 13।।
आगमिष्यति सैकाग्र्यध्याननिष्ठा स्थिरा भव। इदानीं चित्रकूटाद्रावाश्रमे वसति प्रभुः।।14।।
यावदागमनं तस्य तावद्रक्ष कलेवरम्। दृष्ट्वैव राघवं दग्ध्वा देहं यास्यसि तत्पदम्।। 15।।

rāmo dāśarathirjātaḥ paramātmā sanātanaḥ /
rākṣasānāṃ vadhārthāya ṛṣīṇāṃ rakṣaṇāya ca //
āgamiṣyati saikāgradhyānaniṣṭhā sthirā bhava /
idānīṃ citrakūṭādrāvāśrame vasati prabhuḥ //
yāvadāgamanaṃ tasya tāvadrakṣa kalevaram /
dṛṣṭvaiva rāghavaṃ dagdhvā dehaṃ yāsyasi tatpadam //

(He had advised me that—) The eternal Parmatma (supreme Lord) has taken birth as Sri Ram, the son of king Dashrath, for the purpose of slaying the demons and to protect the sages and hermits (13). He shall be coming here soon. You meditate upon him and stay here. Nowadays, the Lord is residing on the Chitrakoot mountains (14). Till the time he comes here, look after (take care of) your body. When Raghav (Sri Ram) comes here, you would burn your external gross body while beholding him in front of your eyes and then go to his abode (15).

[Note :—This explains why Shabari had been collecting flowers and fruits, awaiting the auspicious arrival of Sri Ram and Laxman because she knew in advance that they will come.]

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तथैवाकरवं राम त्वद्ध्यानैकपरायणा। प्रतीक्ष्यागमनं तेऽद्य सफलं गुरुभाषितम्।। 16।।
तव सन्दर्शनं राम गुरूणामपि मे न हि। योषिन्मूढाप्रमेयात्मन् हीनजातिसमुद्भवा।। 17।।

tathaivākaravaṃ rāma tvaddhyānaikaparāyaṇā /
pratīkṣyāgamanaṃ te'dya saphalaṃ gurubhāṣitam //
tava sandarśanaṃ rāma gurūṇāmapi me na hi /
yoṣinmūḍhāprameyātman hīnajātisamudbhavā //

Oh Sri Ram! According to his instructions, I had been meditating exclusively on (i.e. always thinking about, contemplating and meditating upon) you, and waiting for your auspicious arrival. Today, those words of my Guru (revered moral preceptor) have become truthful and borne fruits (16).

Oh Sri Ram, the boundless, limitless, endless, immeasurable, infinite and eternal supreme Soul! Even my Guru could not have your auspicious Darshan (divine sight), and I am, on the other hand, only an ignorant, illiterate, ordinary and humble woman born in a low caste (so, I could never ever expect it in my wildest of dreams that I will ever get the fortunate chance to meet your holiness in my life) (17).

तव दासस्य दासानां शतशङ्ख्योत्तरस्य वा। दासीत्वे नाधिकारोऽस्ति कुतः साक्षात्तवैव हि।। 18।।
कथं रामाद्य मे दृष्टस्त्वं मनोवागगोचरः। स्तोतुं न जाने देवेश किं करोमि प्रसीद मे।। 19।।

tava dāsasya dāsānāṃ śataśaṅkhyottarasya vā /
dāsītve nādhikāro'sti kutaḥ sākṣāttavaiva hi //
kathaṃ rāmādya me dṛṣṭastvaṃ manovāgagocaraḥ /
stotuṃ na jāne deveśa kiṃ karomi prasīda me //

I am not worthy to be called even a humble maid servant of those who are themselves servants but placed hundred times down the hierarchial ladder of servants who serve the Lord directly as his close devotees and followers; then what face do I have to call myself your direct servant (devotee, follower, subordinate, supplicant)? (18).

Oh Sri Ram! You are not the subject matter to be understood and comprehended or debated and discussed either by the mind or the speech, then I do not know how I have been made to be privileged enough to have your auspicious, divine, holy and august sight. Oh the Lord of Gods! I do not know how to pray to you, or sing your glories. What shall I do now? Please be pleased with me out of your own accord' (19).

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[Note :— Shabari expresses her humility, simplicity and devotion of the highest order because she does not even attempt to pray to the Lord, being overcome with extreme joy astonishment at her good fortune. She seems numbed and prefers to keep quiet instead of trying to encapsulate her surging emotions in a group of words which would never have been able to express her no matter how hard she tried. The lesson here is that the Lord needs no prayer besides humble love and surrender to please him. It is aright to say hymns and laud the Lord's glorious using the choicest of verses and rhymes, but if they lack devotion and love and sincerity, and are merely done to exhibit scholarship, then the Lord might not be as much pleased as when no words are spoken and the devotee simply surrenders himself with tearful eyes.

In verse no. 18 she means that she is so lowly by birth that she can't imagine to even serve pious, saintly, fortunate people who are the devotees of the Lord. In verse no. 19, she expresses surprise at her good fortune and privilege that she has got the most unexpected reward which is beyond her wildest of dreams. She is dumbfounded and stunned at her own good fortune. Being illiterate, she could not use classical language to praise the Lord, and neither could she showcase her prowess in metaphysics and theology to honour the Lord. The rewards she got inspite of her shortcomings are immeasurable in spiritual terms—not only did she have the privilege to feed the Lord with her own hands like a mother, and this is no small feat because of her low birth, she was also preached on Bhakti by the Lord himself, which would act as yardstick in this matter for all times to come, and was provided the great and unique privilege of being cremated by the Lord himself, a fortune that was denied to his own mother Kaushalya or his father Dashrath.]

श्रीराम उवाच

पुंस्त्वे स्त्रीत्वे विशेषो वा जातिनामाश्रमादयः। न कारणं मद्भजने भक्तिरेव हि कारणम्॥20॥
यज्ञदानतपोभिर्वा वेदाध्ययनकर्मभिः। नैव द्रष्टुमहं शक्यो मद्भक्तिविमुखैः सदा॥ 21॥
तस्माद्भामिनि सङ्केपाद्वक्ष्येऽहं भक्तिसाधनम्। सतां सङ्गतिरेवात्र साधनं प्रथमं स्मृतम्॥22॥

śrīrāma uvāca

puṁstve strītve viśeṣo vā jātināmāśramādayaḥ /
na kāraṇaṃ madbhajane bhaktireva hi kāraṇam //
yajñadānatapobhirvā vedādhyayanakarmabhiḥ /
naiva draṣṭumahaṃ śakyo madbhaktivimukhaiḥ sadā //
tasmādbhāmini saṅkṣepādvakṣye'haṃ bhaktisādhanam /
satāṃ saṅgatirevātra sādhanaṃ prathamaṃ smṛtam //

(Sri Ram replied—) 'Distinction made on the basis of a male and

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female body, or distinction made on the basis of a person's caste, creed, clan, name and section of society, are not the criterion conducive for my 'Bhajan' (i.e. they are not the essential factors or a necessary requirements or the determining elements to make one eligible for my worship, prayer, adoration or devotion). The only factor is my sincere and dedicated 'Bhakti' (devotion and dedication for me, veneration and reverence for me, submission and surrender to me) (20).

Those who are devoid of dedicated and sincere Bhakti in me can never see me (have my auspicious communion and sight) by employing any other means such as doing various Yagyas (religious sacrifices), giving of Daan (charity, alms, donations), doing Tapa (austerities and penances, sufferance of hardships for spiritual pursuits), studying of the Vedas, or by any other method or deed (21).

Hence, oh gentle lady, I shall now describe to you in brief the methods, means or paths for my Bhakti. The first among them is communion with saints (where divine and spiritual talks are held) (22).

द्वितीयं मत्कथालापस्तृतीयं मद्गुणेरणम्। व्याख्यातृत्वं मद्वचसां चतुर्थं साधनं भवेत्।। 23।।
आचार्योपासनं भद्रे मद्बुद्ध्यामायया सदा। पञ्चमं पुण्यशीलत्वं यमादि नियमादि च।।24।।
निष्ठा मत्पूजने नित्यं षष्ठं साधनमीरितम्। मम मन्त्रोपासकत्वं साङ्गं सप्तममुच्यते।। 25।।

dvitīyaṃ matkathālāpastṛtīyaṃ madguṇeraṇam /
vyākhyātṛtvaṃ madvacasāṃ caturthaṃ sādhanaṃ bhavet //
ācāryopāsanaṃ bhadre madbuddhyāmāyayā sadā /
pañcamaṃ puṇyaśīlatvaṃ yamādi niyamādi ca //
niṣṭhā matpūjane nityaṃ ṣaṣṭhaṃ sādhanamīritam /
mama mantropāsakatvaṃ sāṅgaṃ saptamamucyate //

The second method is singing (i.e. listening, reading, studying, reciting, praising) the stories of my divine birth and deeds that I've done in this world.

The third method is to discuss and talk about my auspicious virtues and qualities, the stellar values and principles for which I stand, along with my noble characters.

The fourth method is to explain to others, to elucidate upon, to expound and narrate to them, to preach them and advice, and to remove their doubts about my 'divine words' (such as the great sayings, the profound spiritual philosophy, the doctrines, the tenets,

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the maxims and axioms of the Vedas, the Upanishads and other scriptures) (23).

Oh gentle one! The fifth path is to serve one's Guru (a learned and wise moral preceptor, a teacher, a guide) with full devotion, dedication and sincerity, thinking him to be next only to God and worthy of equal reverence and honour, without having any pretensions, conceit, wickedness and falsehood in such service.

The sixth path is to observe purity of thought, behaviour, conduct, inclination and temperament, to observe the tenets and fundamental principles concerning 'Yam and Niyam' (self control and restraint over the sense organs of the body, as well as to follow other relevant rules and regulations conducive to spiritual enhancement and general welfare of the creature), and to have inherent veneration, honour, affection and dedication towards me, while at the same time offering sincere worship, prayer, oblations, honour and service to me.

The seventh path is concentrating, meditating, contemplating, reflecting upon and worshipping my holy Mantra with all dedication and sincerity, completely involving all the senses, both the external ones as well as the internal ones, in doing so (24-25).

[Note—The virtues of Yam and Niyam have been described in Skand Puran in these words :—

सत्यं क्षमाऽऽर्जवं ध्यानमानशंस्यमहिंसनम्।। दमः प्रसादो माधुर्यं मृदुतेति यमा दश।
शौचं स्त्रानं तपो दानं मौनेज्याध्ययनं व्रतम्। उपोळाणोपस्थदण्डौ दशैते नियमाः स्मृताः।।
(स्कन्दपु०, ब्रा० ध० मा० 5/19-21)

The ten 'Yams' are— truthfulness, forgiveness, simplicity, Dhyan (meditation, concentration of the mind), lack of cruelty (or presence of compassion and mercy), forsaking violence, restraint of mind and sense organs, pleasant demeanours and sweet towards all). The 10 'Niyams' are— cleanliness/ablution, bath (purification of body), Tapa (austerities, penances, sufferings), alms and charities, keeping silence, Yagya (sacrifices, religious rituals), self study, observance of vows, keeping fasts, celibacy. (Skanda Puran, Bra. Dha. Ma. 5/19-21]

मद्भक्तेष्वधिका पूजा सर्वभूतेषु मन्मतिः। बाह्यार्थेषु विरागित्वं शमादिसहितं तथा।।26।।
अष्टमं नवमं तत्त्वविचारो मम भामिनी। एवं नवविधा भक्तिः साधनं यस्य कस्य वा।।27।।
स्त्रियो वा पुरुषस्यापि तिर्यग्योनिगतस्य वा। भक्तिः सञ्जायते प्रेमलक्षणा शुभलक्षणे।।28।।

madbhakteṣvadhikā pūjā sarvabhūteṣu manmatiḥ/
bāhyārtheṣu virāgitvaṃ śamādisahitaṃ tathā//

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aṣṭamaṃ navamaṃ tattvavicāro mama bhāmini /
evaṃ navavidhā bhaktiḥ sādhanaṃ yasya kasya vā //
striyo vā puruṣasyāpi tiryagyonigatasya vā /
bhaktiḥ sañjāyate premalakṣaṇā śubhalakṣaṇe //

The eighth path is to worship, respect, revere, honour and adore my devotees more than me, to regard all the creatures as being my image (or my semblance; to regard me as being inherently present in all the creatures as their Atma and removing any vestiges of duality; to show respect them all as one would respect me), to have total detachment, renunciation, indifference and dispassion towards all the external objects of this mundane, deluding and materialistic world while observing the principles and virtues of 'Sham' (peace, tranquility, calmness, restraint of sense organs and mind) and 'Dam' (tolerance, forbearance, endurance, fortitude etc.) (26).

The ninth path is to seriously discuss, contemplate upon, deeply ponder and endeavour to acquire deep insight, to learn and imbibe the fundamental truths and essential principles as expounded and enunciated by the scriptures (about me and this creation).

Oh gentle lady! These are the nine-fold paths of Bhakti (worship and devotion as defined above) (27). Oh the auspicious lady with good and virtuous characters! Anyone who has (i.e. possesses, inculcates or follows) any of these methods or paths, whether a woman, a man, a bird or an animal or any other form of creature, will indeed witness the emergence (sprouting) of the glorious virtue of devotion and worship, marked (characterised) by sincere and undiluted affection and love for me, the supreme Lord, in his heart. (28).

[Note—The above nine virtues described in verse no.22-28 are the characteristic features of true devotees of Sri Ram.]

भक्तौ सञ्जातमात्रायां मत्तत्त्वानुभवस्तदा। ममानुभवसिद्धस्य मुक्तिस्तत्रैव जन्मनि।। 29।।
स्यात्तस्मात्कारणं भक्तिर्मोक्षस्येति सुनिश्चितम्। प्रथमं साधनं यस्य भवेत्तस्य क्रमेण तु।।30।।
भवेत्सर्वं ततो भक्तिर्मुक्तिरेव सुनिश्चितम्। यस्मान्मद्भक्तियुक्ता त्वं ततोऽहं त्वामुपस्थितः।।31।।

bhaktau sañjātamātrāyāṃ mattattvānubhavastadā /
mamānubhavasiddhasya muktistatraiva janmani //
syāttasmātkāraṇaṃ bhaktirmokṣasyeti suniścitam /
prathamaṃ sādhanaṃ yasya bhavettasya krameṇa tu //
bhavetsarvaṃ tato bhaktirmuktireva suniścitam /
yasmānmadbhaktiyuktā tvaṃ tato'haṃ tvāmupasthitaḥ //

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As soon as Bhakti emerges (takes shape, sprouts, is kindled, is ignited, strikes its roots) in one's heart, one can experience my true form, and those who are fortunate enough to once experience me (i.e. realise my existence and witness my presence on the screen of their heart-mind complex), do attain emancipation and salvation in this birth (life) itself without any doubt (29).

Hence, it is thus unequivocally established and proved beyond doubt that the only means and the easiest path of emancipation and salvation is sincere and unwavering devotion and dedication (Bhakti) for me. Those who follow the first path (verse no. 22) are able to acquire access to the rest of the paths automatically without difficulty. [That is, if one has contact with true, holy and pious saints and interacts with them, then the rest of the virtues that lead to me would come to him on their own. The obvious reason is the maxim 'one becomes like the company he keeps'.] (30). As a result, they are sure to get the double benefit of devotion as well as emancipation and salvation simultaneously. Since you are endowed with my pure and sincere Bhakti, it is the reason why I have come to you (31).

[Note (1) Verse no.20-31 can be called the Gospel of Lord Ram for Shabari.

(2) See also Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 48-49 and Uttar Kand, Canto 7, verse no. 59-82.

(3)One of the classics ever written on the theme of Lord Ram is the saint-philosopher-poet-devotee Goswami Tulsidas, whose epic *'Ram Charit Manas'* is a most revered text in the heartland of India's Hindi speaking belt. This epic has made Ramayan more popular amongst the masses than any other single holy text. Ram Charit Manas is soaked in devotion and spiritualism. Tulsidas has used this 'episode of Shabari' to elucidate on the concept of 9-fold path of Bhakti in the holy book's Aranya Kand, Chaupi no. 7 of Doha 35 till Chaupi no. 6-1/2 of Doha 36. I am quoting these verses to add vibrancy and devotional flavour to this episode of Shabari.

"When Shabari had finished paying her obeisance to the Lord and he had eaten fruits offered by her, Sri Ram told her that he believes in only one relationship, and that is Bhakti. Then he lists the 'nine forms of devotion' that provides deliverance to a creature. He said, 'A man lacking in devotion is as worthless as a cloud without rain. Now I shall enumerate the nine types of Bhakti that pleases me; listen carefully and cherish them in your heart and mind. (1) The first is having fellowship and communion with pious saints and holy men; (2) the second is to have liking for and eagerness to hear divine stories and episodes related to my life and deeds;

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(3) the third form is to humbly serve the holy lotus-feet of one's Guru (moral preceptor and teacher); (4) the fourth form is to sing and emotionally submerge one's self in my divine glories and virtues; (5) the fifth form of devotion is to constantly and persistently repeat and remain engrossed and submerged in my holy and divine name, and have unflinching and steady faith and conviction in it's glory and divinity as revealed in the Vedas; (6) the sixth form is to have self restraint and inculcate noble and auspicious virtues such as humility, politeness, dignified existence, observing etiquette and social norms, to abstain from indulgences and remaining engrossed in multifarious worldly pursuits, and to diligently and honestly follow the righteous and noble path shown by and fit for saints and sages who are wise, erudite, enlightened and sagacious; (7) the next form of Bhakti, the seventh, is to see the whole creation as my image (i.e. to believe in the philosophy of non-duality), and treats saints and sages as more honourable and revered than me; (8) the eighth form of Bhakti is to be perpetually satisfied and contented with whatever one has got and never yearn for more, as well as to never find faults with others; and (9) finally the ninth form is to be simple hearted without any deception and fraud, without any deceit and impostering, to be straightforward in one's dealings with all others, to have unwavering and unflinching faith, conviction and reliance upon me (and on no body else), and not to feel either exulted or depressed (under favourable or unfavourable circumstances, because he has reliance upon me and treats the good and bad happenings in the world with equanimity as affect the body which lives in the world and is affected by circumstances, and not the 'true self' which is the pure conscious Atma). Oh Shabari! Anyone who possesses even any one of these forms of devotions is very dear to me, whether one is a man or a woman or any other creature for that matter." [Goswami Tulsidas' 'Ram Charit Manas', Aranya Kand, stanza 7 of Doha 35 to stanza 6-1/2 .]

इतो मद्दर्शनान्मुक्तिस्तव नास्त्यत्र संशयः। यदि जानासि मे ब्रूहि सीता कमललोचना ।। 32 ।।
कुत्रास्ते केन वा नीता प्रिया मे प्रियदर्शना ।। 33 ।।

ito maddarśanānmuktistava nāstyatra saṁśayaḥ /
yadi jānāsi me brūhi sītā kamalalocanā //
kutrāste kena vā nītā priyā me priyadarśanā //

Now that you have had my Darshan (divine and august view), your emancipation and salvation are indeed assured—there is no doubt about it. If you know, then do tell me the whereabouts of the lotus-eyed Sita (32). Who has taken away my pleasant looking and beloved wife ?' (33).

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शबर्युवाच

देव जानासि सर्वज्ञ सर्वं त्वं विश्वभावन। तथापि पृच्छसे यन्मां लोकाननुसृतः प्रभो।।34।।
ततोऽहमभिधास्यामि सीता यत्राधुना स्थिता। रावणेन हृता सीता लङ्कायां वर्ततेऽधुना।।35।।

śabaryuvāca

deva jānāsi sarvajña sarvaṃ tvaṃ viśvabhāvana /
tathāpi pṛcchase yanmāṃ lokānanusṛtaḥ prabho //
tato'hamabhidhāsyāmi sītā yatrādhunā sthitā /
rāvaṇena hṛtā sītā laṅkāyāṃ vartate'dhunā //

(Shabari said—) 'Oh Lord! Oh the all-knowing, wise, erudite and the omniscient one! Oh the one who charms the universe, captivates it and keeps it in his thrall! You are aware of (know) everything. Inspite of that, oh Lord, if you wish to maintain (follow) the traditional behaviour befitting an ordinary human and ask me about the whereabouts of Sita (34), then I shall tell you. Sita has been stolen (abducted, kidnapped) by Ravana, and at this time she is in Lanka (35).

इतः समीपे रामास्ते पम्पानाम सरोवरम्। ऋष्यमूकगिरिर्नाम तत्समीपे महानगः।। 36।।
चतुर्भिर्मन्त्रिभिः सार्धं सुग्रीवो वानराधिपः। भीतभीतः सदा यत्र तिष्ठत्यतुलविक्रमः।।37।।
वालिनश्च भयाद् भ्रातुस्तदगम्यमृषेर्भयात्। वालिनस्तत्र गच्छ त्वं तेन सख्यं कुरु प्रभो।।38।।
सुग्रीवेण स सर्वं ते कार्यं सम्पादयिष्यति। अहमग्निं प्रवेक्ष्यामि तवाग्रे रघुनन्दन।।39।।

itaḥ samīpe rāmāste pampānāma sarovaram /
ṛṣyamūkagirirnāma tatsamīpe mahānagaḥ //
caturbhirmantribhiḥ sārdhaṃ sugrīvo vānarādhipaḥ /
bhītabhītaḥ sadā yatra tiṣṭhatyatulavikramaḥ //
vālinaśca bhayād bhrātustadagamyamṛṣerbhayāt /
vālinastatra gaccha tvaṃ tena sakhyaṃ kuru prabho //
sugrīveṇa sa sarvaṃ te kāryaṃ sampādayiṣyati /
ahamagniṃ praveksyāmi tavāgre raghunandana //

Oh Sri Ram! There is a lake called Pampa near here. Near it is a large mountain called Rishyamook (36). There, Sugriv, the king of monkeys who is peerless in valour and famed in strength, lives with his four ministers (37) due to the mortal fear of his brother Vaali. Because of a curse by a sage, that place is totally out of bounds for Vaali. Oh Lord! Go there and befriend yourself with Sugriv (38). Oh

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Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Sugriv will fulfill all your requirements (i.e. take care of all your needs). Now, I shall enter the sacred fire in front of you (39).

मुहूर्तं तिष्ठ राजेन्द्र यावद्दग्ध्वा कलेवरम्। यास्यामि भगवन् राम तव विष्णोः परं पदम्।। 40।।
इति रामं समामन्त्र्य प्रविवेश हुताशनम्। क्षणान्निर्धूय सकलमविद्याकृतबन्धनम्।
रामप्रसादाच्छबरी मोक्षं प्रापातिदुर्लभम्।। 41।।

muhūrtaṃ tiṣṭha rājendra yāvaddagdhvā kalevaram /
yāsyāmi bhagavan rāma tava viṣṇoḥ paraṃ padam //
iti rāmaṃ samāmantrya praviveśa hutāśanam /
kṣaṇānnirdhūya sakalamavidyākṛtabandhanam /
rāmaprasādācchabarī mokṣaṃ prāpātidurlabham //

Oh Rajendra (literally, a great King amongst other ordinary kings; an emperor)! Oh Lord Ram! Till the time I burn my mortal coil (body) and go to the abode of Lord Vishnu (i.e. attain the supreme stature of Vishnu's holy feet), you must wait for one 'Muhurt' till then (i.e. an auspicious period of time equivalent to 1 hour and 48 minutes; here meaning for a short while)' (40). After talking with Sri Ram in the above manner, Shabari entered the sacred holy fire, and in a fleeting moment she burnt all her fetters (tying her to this mundane, deluding world of an endless cycle of birth and death) caused by ignorance and delusions, and by the grace of Sri Ram, she attained the most rare state of emancipation and salvation of the soul (by becoming one with the supreme Soul called Parmatma) (41).

किं दुर्लभं जगन्नाथे श्रीरामे भक्तवत्सले। प्रसन्नेऽधमजन्मापि शबरी मुक्तिमाप सा।। 42।।
किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणा मुख्याः पुण्याः श्रीरामचिन्तकाः। मुक्तिं यान्तीति तद्भक्तिर्मुक्तिरेव न संशयः।।43।।

kiṃ durlabhaṃ jagannāthe śrīrāme bhaktavatsale /
prasanne'dhamajanmāpi śabarī muktimāpa sā //
kiṃ punarbrahmaṇā mukhyāḥ puṇyāḥ śrīrāmacintakāḥ /
muktiṃ yāntīti tadbhaktirmuktireva na saṁśayaḥ //

What is difficult or rare for a person when Sri Ram—who is the Lord of the universe, and who is benevolent, munificent, magnanimous and benignant towards his devotees—is pleased with him/her! (Look, what a marvel that—) Though born in a low caste and devoid of the entire wherewithal for emancipation and salvation, even Shabari had attained the highest stature of 'Mukti' (liberation and deliverance from

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the fetters that shackle a creature to the endless cycle of birth and death accompanied with all the troubles and tribulations, agonies and miseries) (42). Then what is there to be surprised of if those who are righteous and noble, such as Brahmins etc. who constantly remember, meditate and concentrate upon Sri Ram, get freedom and deliverance (from this mundane, deluding, artificial and entrapping world)? Without doubt, Sri Ram's devotion and worship is equivalent to attaining 'Mukti' (freedom, liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) (43).

[Note—The concept of Mukti can be briefly summarized as follows:—
The word Mukti, put simply, means 'liberation and deliverance'. For example, when a person is in a difficult situation, he yearns for freedom from his torments, and once he gets it, he says that he has got Mukti or liberation from his torments, that is, he is delivered from a hellish situation.

In spiritual realm, Mukti has different connotations for the 2 main schools of Hindu philosophy— the Advaitya and the Dvaitya. The Advaitya school of thought, as the name suggests, means 'non-duality' while Dvaitya means 'duality'. The Advaitya school's belief, inter alia, is that the soul of the creature is one with the supreme Soul called Brahma. This is an eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent absolute entity. It is the ultimate truth and reality. Hence, Mukti in this context means the individual soul of the creature breaking free or being 'liberated' from the endless cycle of birth and death, and it getting 'delivered' from its temporary abode in the physical body of the creature. It being 'emancipated' means that its disability to break free has been overcome and it has been finally liberated, but this liberation or emancipation must logically end in the 'salvation' of the creature which means merging of the liberated soul with its primary source which is the Brahma. It is like pouring the cup of water back into the ocean. The main exponent of this philosophy was Sankaracharya.

The Dvaitya school believes in duality, i.e., that the supreme Lord (God) and the Jiva (creature) are two separate entities. For this school, there are four types of Mukti, viz (i) Salokya (to live in the abode of the God), (ii) Samipya (to live near God), (iii) Sarupya (to have a form similar to God) and (iv) Saujya (being united with the God). This latter Saujya is also called the 'Param Pad' or supreme state of being one with the Lord.

Since the Advitya school believes in only one end of the soul— its merger with the parent Soul— they emphasis 'Kaivalya Mukti' as the only form of salvation and emancipation. The word Kaivalya itself means 'only'. The path to emancipation and salvation according to the Dvaitya school

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is through the medium of various mediation techniques such as— (i) Japa (repetition of the holy name of a chosen God), (ii) Huta (offering of rituals and sacrifices), (iii) Archana (roughly meaning worship and service), (iv) Puja (meaning adoration and worship of the chosen deity) and (v) Dhyan (concentrating on the various forms, activities and glorious stories associated with the deity). For the Advaitya school of philosophy, mediation emphasises control of the functions of the body through various exercises, restraints and concentrations, a process called Yoga.

Contemplation in the end, in both the cases, makes the seeker/aspirant realise the futility of the world and kindles in him an intense desire to search out the ultimate Truth and Reality. The Upanishads here act as a referee and guide. They advise the seeker/aspirant about the goal of life. What one contemplates with intensity is what one becomes. So, if one contemplates seriously on the 'Truth', he verily becomes the truth personified, and if he contemplates on the 'False', he verily becomes false himself.]

भक्तिर्मुक्तिविधायिनी भगवतः श्रीरामचन्द्रस्य हे
लोकाः कामदुघाङ्घ्रिपद्मयुगलं सेवध्वमत्युत्सुकाः।
नानाज्ञानविशेषमन्त्रवितितं त्यक्त्वा सुदूरे भृशं
रामं श्यामतनुं स्मरारिहृदये भान्तं भजध्वं बुधाः॥44॥

bhaktirmuktividhāyinī bhagavataḥ śrīrāmacandrasya he
lokāḥ kāmadughāṅghripadmayugalaṃ sevadhvamatyutsukāḥ /
nānājñānaviśeṣamantravitatiṃ tyaktvā sudūre bhṛśaṃ
rāmaṃ śyāmatanuṃ smarārihṛdaye bhāntaṃ bhajadhvaṃ budhāḥ //

Oh people (the creatures of the world)! Lord Ramchandra's Bhakti is the only bestower (granter, giver) of Mukti. Hence, one should diligently, eagerly and sincerely serve, with full devotion and dedication, the twin holy feet of Sri Ram which are like the all wish fulfilling Kamdhenu cow. Oh the wise ones! Keep these different endless debates and discussions which are confusing and vexing for the spirit, which are apparently opposed to each other— involving a bewildering array of scriptural knowledge and logic as well as long and elaborate Mantras—at bay and far away from you (i.e. don't bother much about them). Instead of that, you should switch on immediately to devotion, worship, adoration, prayers, dedication, submission, service, humility and singing of hymns and glories of Sri Ram who has a divine dark complexion and is enshrined reverentially in the heart of Lord Shiva (44).

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[Note :-Verse nos. 42-44 lay stress on Bhakti and Bhajan as opposed to all other means of attaining emancipation and salvation of the soul, including the path of Gyan.

Briefly, these three concepts of Bhakti, Bhajan and Gyan can be simply understood to mean the various paths leading to the same goal.

'Bhakti'—(noun; feminine gender) The concept of Bhakti has a very broad sweep, and it incorporates such glorious virtues as having, inter alia, sincere devotion and firm faith in the Lord, total submission and surrender before the Lord, having unwavering faith, conviction, belief and dedication for the Lord, having reverence and veneration for the Lord, having no other solace, succour, hope and respite except the Lord, treating oneself as a humble servant of the Lord, remembering the Lord at all times and offering each and every deed and action to the Lord, remaining unruffled and calm under all circumstances with the view that these are the wishes of the Lord and one has no right to get overly excited over them.

'Bhajan'—(noun; masculine gender) It refers to prayer, worship, adoration, singing of hymns, adulation, lauding and generally highlighting the good and auspicious characteristics of the God or the object of adoration.

'Gyan'(noun, masculine gender) The realisation or awareness that Atma is, inter alia, different from the body, and is the true identity of a creature, is called 'Gyan'. This Atma is a very unique entity and is called the 'true self' of the creature. Gyan refers to self realisation and attainment of enlightenment about the absolute Truth and Reality in this creation. It encompasses a broad swathe of philosophy which is taught by the Upanishads, called Vedanta.

Goswami Tulsidas has very succinctly and clearly defined the difference between Gyan and Bhakti in his Ram Charit Manas during the discourse between the crow saint Kagbhusund and Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu who had gone to the former to hear the divine story of the Lord and remove his doubts. Let us see how Tulsidas delineates Bhakti from Gyan in Ram Charit Manas' Uttar Kand, Chaupai 11-16, stanza 'ka' of Doha 115, and Chaupi 1-8, stanza 'ka' of Doha 116:— "Garud asked sage Kagbhusund—'Please tell me oh Lord all the differences between Gyan and Bhakti'. Kagbhusund replied—'There is no difference between them, both of them are equally potent and efficacious in horrors and torments of birth and death. Those who are exalted in knowledge however point out some differences between them. I'll tell these to you, listen carefully. Gyan (wisdom, knowledge of truth and reality, erudition and sagacity,

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spiritual expertise and enlightenment), Vairagya (renunciation and dispassion), Yoga (meditation leading to a union with the Supreme Being), and Vigyan (true Realisation leading to unequivocal conviction and faith on the supreme and transcendental Reality and Truth)—these are all masculine in nature and conception. A man is physically stronger and more powerful as compared to his female counterpart, and this is right from their birth as a natural phenomenon. Only a man who is resolute and firm in his mind can remain unattached and forsake being lured by the deluding and entrapping charms of a woman, and not the one who is lascivious and passionate and has turned away from the holy feet of Sri Ram". [Uttar Kand, Chaupai 11-16 and stanza 'ka' of Doha 115.]

"I do not speak in a partisan way, but only reiterate what the Vedas, Purans and saints have asserted in this context. A woman is never enamoured by the beauty of another woman. Both Bhakti and Maya (the Lord's deluding and ignorance creating maverick powers that holds the entire creation spell bound in its magical spell) are feminine by character and conception. Besides this, the Lord is favorably inclined towards Bhakti as compared to its counterpart Maya which is merely reduced to a status of a dancing girl. Hence, Maya is afraid of annoying Bhakti, so much so that it shrinks away even from the sight of Bhakti and a person who has Bhakti in his heart (because by the virtue of having Bhakti, he is able to have the supreme Lord firmly established in his heart, making Maya scared of that man). Maya therefore cannot wield her influence on such a man. Due to this realisation, wise men advocate and plead on behalf of Bhakti as opposed to Gyan." [Uttar Kand, Chaupi 1-8 of Doha 116 'ka'.

Compare this with Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 47-55. Further, the methods of having devotion as narrated by Sri Ram himself to Laxman in Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 47-51 should also be read in the context of verse nos. 20-30 of this Canto 10. Importance of Bhakti is stressed also in Ayodhya Kand, Canto 1, verse no. 29 and Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse no. 35. Even the Gandharva (erstwhile Kabandh) preferred the divine 'Sagun' form of the Lord as compared to the 'Nirgun' form—see Aranya Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 48-52.

The concept of 'deliverance' has been encapsulated in the epic Mahabharat in these words :—Who gets deliverance.

सुखदुःखे समे यस्य लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ। इच्छाद्वेगौ भयाद्वेगौ सर्वथा मुक्त एव सः।।
वलीपलितसंयोगे काश्र्यं वैवर्ण्यमेव च। कुब्जभावं च जरया यः पश्यति स मुच्यते।।
पुंस्त्वोपघातं कालेन दर्शनोपरमं तथा। बाधिर्यं प्राणमन्दत्वं यः पश्यति स मुच्यते।।
(महा० शान्ति० 288/37, 39-40)

He who is unmoved by and treats joys and happiness as well as sorrows,

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miseries, troubles and misfortunes, gains as well as losses, victories as well as defeats equally, with equanimity and fortitude, whose desires, envies, ill-wills, hatreds, fears and agitations have been completely vanquished or eliminated— is the one who is truly liberated. When old age comes, the body develops wrinkles, becomes lean and decrepit, the hairs change colour to grey, the general appearance looses its sheen and attractiveness while the back tends to bend— one who constantly remains aware of these facts is truly liberated. When the time comes, manliness declines, eyesight fails, the ears do not hear and the vital forces of life becomes weak and on the verge of collapse— one who is always aware these thing is truly liberated. (Mahabrt, Shanit Parva, 288/37, 39-40)

We will observe here that Adhyatma Ramayan, to a great extent, has a resonance in the Holy Bible— more so with its message than the structure. Among the basic tenets of Adhyatma Ramayan are:—(i) sincere devotion, faith and submission towards Sri Ram, (ii) the firm belief and conviction that Sri Ram is the supreme Brahma, the saviour and the redeemer, the one who provides emancipation and salvation, the one who is an embodiment of Dharma itself, the one who has taken an incarnation in this world not only to act as an exemplary example but also to proclaim the righteous path, (iii) the emphasis on trying to purify oneself, purge all the inherent impurities, evils and vices collectively called sins, to realize the pure nature of Atma which is essentially sinless, and inter-alia (iv) that one should turn away from sins and towards Sri Ram because he is the only one who can remit all sins— all these axioms have a parallel in the teaching of Christ and the Holy Bible.

The Bible has two sections— the old and the new testaments. The Old Testament is the law book of the Jews from whom Christianity basically emerged. Old testament's description of the origin of the world, stress on ritualistic form of worship centered around offering of sacrifices and strict adherence to laid-down laws as a means of salvation and deliverance, the coming of the Messiah, the existence of one and only God— all these find a resonance in Adhyatma Ramayan. For instance, creation of the world (Aranya Kand, Canto 9), ritualistic worship (Kishkindha Kand, Canto 4) etc. are reflective of the earlier school of thought.

The New Testament describes the life and times, teachings and ministries of Jesus and his Apostles. The life of Christ contained in the 4 gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John is also the pattern of Ramayan in as much as the book revolves around the life and personality of one single hero, Sri Ram. The simple message of 'follow me with simplicity, humility and devotion, of compassion and love, stress on improvement of oneself' are also in sync with the basic teachings of Ramayan. For instance, Sri Ram's

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teachings to Shabari (Canto 10, Aranya Kand) and to Laxman (Canto 5, Uttar Kand). There are innumerable instances which this author has listed as the various gospels of Adhyatma Ramayan in appendix no. 2 of this book.

The Jews did not regard Christ as the prophesied Messiah and laid stress on ritualistic worship, while Christianity accepted the divinity of Christ and exhorted its followers to follow him as well as the path of devotion and humility shown by him. Christianity retained the laws of old school in their spirit but with practical modifications. Adhyatma Ramayan on the other hand, does not create any dissensions between the old and the reformed schools of thoughts, and it perfectly harmonises them when it accepts the ancient philosophy of ritualistic worship of the Vedas with the reformed outlook laying emphasis on self realisation, self correction and humility and devotion towards the Lord.]

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KISHKINDHA KAND

Kishkindha Kand — Canto 1

Sri Ram's meeting with Sugriv and Hanuman

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

ततः सलक्ष्मणो रामः शनैः पम्पासरस्तटम्। आगत्य सरसां श्रेष्ठं दृष्ट्वा विस्मयमाययौ ।।1।।
क्रोशमात्रं सुविस्तीर्णमगाधामलशम्बरम्। उत्फुल्लाम्बुजकह्लारकुमुदोत्पलमण्डितम् ।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tataḥ salakṣmaṇo rāmaḥ śanaiḥ pampāsarastaṭam /
āgatya sarasāṃ śreṣṭhaṃ dṛṣṭvā vismayamāyayau //
krośapātraṃ suvistīrṇamagādhāmalaśambaram /
utphullāmbujakahlārakumudotpalamaṇḍitam //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Thence Sri Ram, accompanied by Laxman, gradually came to the banks of the lake called Pampasar. He was very astonished and amazed at seeing it (1). It was one Kosa (appx. two miles) in length, was filled with fathomless, crystal clear water, and a wide variety of flowers of the lotus family, such as Ambuj (the pink lotus), Kahalaar (newly sprouted buds of the lotus flower), Kumud (the water white lily) and Utpal (the blue lotus) were blooming in all the directions to adorn it (2).

हंसकारण्डवाकीर्णं चक्रवाकादिशोभितम्। जलकुक्कुटकोयष्टिक्रौञ्चनादोपनादितम् ।।3।।
नानापुष्पलताकीर्णं नानाफलसमावृतम्। सतां मनःस्वच्छजलं पद्मकिञ्जल्कवासितम् ।।4।।

haṃsakāraṇḍavākīrṇaṃ cakravākādiśobhitam /
jalakukkuṭakoyaṣṭikrauñcanādopanāditam //
nānāpuṣpalatākīrṇaṃ nānāphalasamāvṛtam /
satāṃ manaḥsvacchajalaṃ padmakiñjalkavāsitam //

Birds such as Swan and Karandav (a flamingo; a duck) were floating and frolicking around on its placid waters, Chakravaks (the ruddy goose) etc. were enhancing its beauty and attractiveness, while it was echoing with the clamour of sounds made by a wide range of

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birds such as Jalkukut (a type of water borne cock-like bird having a black body and blue feathers), Koyasti (a type of Indian cuckoo), Kronch (the heron bird) etc. (3). It was well endowed with a fascinating array of colourful flowering creepers and surrounded by fruit trees of different types, while its crystal clear water, which was made fragrant and sweet-smelling by its contact with the numerous yellow lotus flowers present in its clean and clear waters which resembled the pure and unpolluted mind of saints (4).

तत्रोपस्पृश्य सलिलं पीत्वा श्रमहरं विभुः। सानुजः सरसस्तीरे शीतलेन पथा ययौ।। 5।।
ऋष्यमूकगिरेः पार्श्वे गच्छन्तौ रामलक्ष्मणौ। धनुर्बाणकरौ दान्तौ जटावल्कलमण्डितौ।
पश्यन्तौ विविधान्वृक्षान् गिरेः शोभां सुविक्रमौ।। 6।।

tatropaspṛśya salilaṃ pītvā śramaharaṃ vibhuḥ/
sānujaḥ sarasastīre śītalena pathā yayau//
ṛṣyamūkagireḥ pārśve gacchantau rāmalakṣmaṇau/
dhanurbāṇakarau dāntau jaṭāvalkalamaṇḍitau/
paśyantau vividhānvṛkṣān gireḥ śobhāṃ suvikramau//

Reaching the place, the 'Vibhu' (omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal, almighty, all-encompassing Lord; i.e. Sri Ram), along with his younger brother (Laxman), sipped (to clean the mouth) and then drank its water which was very refreshing and could remove the weariness of a long journey. Then, having refreshed himself, he moved ahead along its banks on a cool path provided with shade from verdant trees lining it (5).

In this manner Sri Ram and Laxman—who were adorned by matted hairs and clothes made of birch, who were self-restrained (i.e. had control over their sense organs and mind), were most valorous, valiant, strong and powerful, and who held bows and arrows in their hands—moved slowly and majestically towards the Rishyamook mountain while watching and enjoying the beauty and charm of the various trees on the way and beholding the beauty of the mountain (and the surrounding countryside) (6).

सुग्रीवस्तु गिरेर्मूर्ध्नि चतुर्भिः सह वानरैः। स्थित्वा ददर्श तौ यान्तावारुरोह गिरेः शिरः।। 7।।
भयादाह हनूमन्तं कौ तौ वीरवरौ सखे। गच्छ जानीहि भद्रं ते वटुभूत्वा द्विजाकृतिः।। 8।।

sugrīvastu girermūrdhni caturbhiḥ saha vānaraiḥ/
sthitvā dadarśa tau yāntāvāruroha gireḥ śiraḥ//

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bhayādāha hanūmantaṃ kau tau vīravarau sakhe /
gaccha jānīhi bhadraṃ te vaṭurbhūtvā dvijākṛtiḥ //

At that time, Sugriv was sitting with his four ministers on a mountain top. When he saw them coming that way, he climbed the highest peak of the mountain. [It shows that it was not a single cone-shaped mountain, but a series of undulating hills and mountains with low and high peaks.] (7).

Scared at what he saw, he said to Hanuman, 'Oh friend! Look, who are these two braves moving around below! You be blessed! You go to them dressed (disguised) as a Brahmachari Brahmin (a celibate Brahmin) and find out the details about them (8).

वालिना प्रेषितौ किंवा मा हन्तुं समुपागतौ। ताभ्यां सम्भाषणं कृत्वा जानीहि हृदयं तयोः।। 9।।
यदि तौ दुष्टहृदयौ संज्ञां कुरु कराग्रतः। विनयावनतो भूत्वा एवं जानीहि निश्चयम्।। 10।।

vālinā preṣitau kiṃvā māṃ hantuṃ samupāgatau /
tābhyāṃ sambhāṣaṇaṃ kṛtvā jānīhi hṛdayaṃ tayoḥ //
yadi tau duṣṭahṛdayau saṃjñāṃ kuru karāgrataḥ /
vinayāvanato bhūtvā evaṃ jānīhi niścayam //

Is it that they have come here to kill me at the behest of Vaali (because he could not come here personally so he sent them to settle scores with me). You talk with them and find out the reason for their coming here (9). If you find they are wicked, malicious and have a malefic heart, you must indicate it to me by making signs with your fingers. Be careful; find out all about this (decide the matter and come to the truth) very politely (so that they don't get any hint of who you are) (10).

तथेति वदुरूपेण हनुमान् समुपागतः। विनयावनतो भूत्वा रामं नत्वेदमब्रवीत्।। 11।।
कौ युवां पुरुषव्याघ्रौ युवानौ वीरसम्मतौ। द्योतयन्तौ दिशः सर्वाः प्रभया भास्कराविव।। 12।।

tatheti vaṭurūpeṇa hanumān samupāgataḥ /
vinayāvanato bhūtvā rāmaṃ natvedamabravīt //
kau yuvāṃ puruṣavyāghrau yuvānau vīrasammatau /
dyotayantau diśaḥ sarvāḥ prabhayā bhāskarāviva //

Then Hanuman made himself into a Brahmachari (i.e. disguised himself as a celibate Brahmin) and came to Sri Ram, bowed before him and said most politely (11)—'Oh the one who is like a lion amongst men! Who are you two? You are young with a youthful body, and you

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look very brave, courageous and strong. You have illuminated all the directions of the compass like a sun by the brilliance and radiance of your body (12).

युवां त्रैलोक्यकर्तारावविति भाति मनो मम। युवां प्रधानपुरुषौ जगद्धेतू जगन्मयौ।। 13।।
मायया मानुषाकारौ चरन्ताविव लीलया। भूभारहरणार्थाय भक्तानां पालनाय च।। 14।।

yuvāṃ trailokyakartārāviti bhāti mano mama/
yuvāṃ pradhānapuruṣau jagaddhetu jaganmayau//
māyayā mānuṣākārau carantāviva līlayā/
bhūbhāraharaṇārthāya bhaktānāṃ pālanāya ca//

My heart and mind says (i.e. it appears to me) that you are the creator of the Triloki (the three worlds—celestial, terrestrial, subterranean), are the primary (primordial, primeval, original) cause of the whole world, are uniformly all-pervading and omnipresent in the whole world, are the supreme Male and the Viraat Purush (the primary male aspect of creation) personified (13). It appears that, in order to remove the burden of the earth and to protect and sustain your devotees, you have playfully (sportingly) assumed a human form by virtue of your Maya (delusion creating magical powers) and are roaming around here for the purpose (14).

अवतीर्णाविह परौ चरन्तौ क्षत्रियाकृती। जगत्स्थितिलयो सर्गं लीलया कर्तुमुद्यतौ।। 15।।
स्वतन्त्रौ प्रेरकौ सर्वहृदयस्थाविहेश्वरौ। नरनारायणौ लोके चरन्ताविति मे मतिः।। 16।।

avatīrṇāviha parau carantau kṣatriyākṛtī/
jagatsthitilayau sargaṃ līlayā kartumudyatau//
svatantrau prerakau sarvahṛdayasthāviheśvarau/
naranārāyaṇau loke carantāviti me matiḥ//

You are the supreme Lord himself who has incarnated (revealed himself) in the form of a Kshatriya prince and are wandering on this earth. You are actively engaged, competent, always ready and diligent in creating, sustaining and annihilating the world/universe as if it was a mere play or sport for you (15). As per my wisdom and intellect (or understanding), it looks that you reside in the heart (inner-self; bosom) of all, motivate and inspire all, are absolutely independent (i.e. you do not have to rely on anybody or take anyone's support in your activities), and are the supreme Lord himself who is roaming here' (16).

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श्रीरामो लक्ष्मणं प्राह पश्यैनं वटुरूपिणम्। शब्दशास्त्रमशेषेण श्रुतं नूनमनेकधा।। 17।।
अनेन भाषितं कृत्स्नं न किञ्चिदपशब्दितम्। ततः प्राह हनूमन्तं राघवो ज्ञानविग्रहः।। 18।।

śrīrāmo lakṣmaṇaṃ prāha paśyainaṃ vaṭurūpiṇam /
śabdaśāstramaśeṣeṇa śrutaṃ nūnamanekadhā //
anena bhāṣitaṃ kṛtsnaṃ nа kiñcidapaśabditam /
tataḥ prāha hanūmantaṃ rāghavo jñānavigrahaḥ //

Then, Sri Ram said to Laxam, 'Oh Laxman! Look at this one in the guise of a Brahmachari standing in front of us. Surely he has studied the science of language (i.e. grammar) many times over very carefully (17). Listen! He has said so many things but there has been no error in his speech or words'. Then Raghav (Sri Ram), who is an embodiment of knowledge and wisdom, said to Hanuman (18)—

अहं दाशरथी रामस्त्वयं मे लक्ष्मणोऽनुजः। सीतया भार्यया सार्धं पितुर्वचनगौरवात्।। 19।।
आगतस्तत्र विपिने स्थितोऽहं दण्डके द्विज। तत्र भार्या ह्रता सीता रक्षसा केनचिन्मम।
तामन्वेष्टुमिहायातौ त्वं को वा कस्य वा वद।। 20।।

ahaṃ dāśarathī rāmastvayaṃ me lakṣmaṇo'nujaḥ /
sītayā bhāryayā sārdhaṃ piturvacanagauravāt //
āgatastatra vipine sthito'haṃ daṇḍake dvija /
tatra bhāryā hṛtā sītā rakṣasā kenacinmama /
tāmanveṣṭumihāyātau tvaṃ ko vā kasya vā vada //

'I am the son of Dashrath and this is my younger brother Laxman. I have come to the forest along with my wife Sita to obey the words of my father (19). I used to stay in the Dandakaranya forest. There, some demon has stolen (abducted) my wife Sita. We have come here to search her out. Tell us, who and whose son are you? (20).

वटुरुवाच

सुग्रीवो नाम राजा यो वानराणां महामतिः। चतुर्भिर्मन्त्रिभिः सार्धं गिरिमूर्धनि तिष्ठति।। 21।।
भ्राता कनीयान् सुग्रीवो वालिनः पापचेतसः। तेन निष्कासितो भार्या ह्रता तस्येह वालिना।।22।।

vaṭuruvāca

sugrīvo nāma rājā yo vānarāṇāṃ mahāmatiḥ /
caturbhirmantribhiḥ sārdhaṃ girimūrdhani tiṣṭhati //
bhrātā kaniyān sugrīvo vālinaḥ pāpacetasaḥ /
tena niṣkāsito bhāryā hṛtā tasyeha vālinā //

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The Brahmachari replied, 'The great and wise Sugriv is the king of monkeys. He stays at the summit of this mountain with his four ministers (21). He is the younger brother of the sinful, wicked, evil and pervert Vaali. He (Vaali) has stolen (i.e. forcefully taken away; usurped) his wife and has thrown (drove) him out of the house (22).

तद्भयादृष्यमूकाख्यं गिरिमाश्रित्य संस्थितः। अहं सुग्रीवसचिवो वायुपत्रो महामते।। 23।।
हनूमान्नाम विख्यातो ह्यञ्जनीगर्भसम्भवः। तेन सख्यं त्वया युक्तं सुग्रीवेण रघूत्तम।। 24।।
भार्यापहारिणं हन्तुं सहायस्ते भविष्यति। इदानीमेव गच्छाम आगच्छ यदि रोचते।। 25।।

tadbhayādṛṣyamūkākhyaṃ girimāśritya saṃsthitaḥ /
ahaṃ sugrīvasacivo vāyuputro mahāmate //
hanumānnāma vikhyāto hyañjanīgarbhasambhavaḥ /
tena sakhyaṃ tvayā yuktaṃ sugrīveṇa raghūttama //
bhāryāpahāriṇaṃ hantuṃ sahāyaste bhaviṣyati /
idānīmeva gacchāma āgaccha yadi rocate //

Hence, out of his fear, Sugriv stays on this Rishyamook mountain. Oh the great and wise one (Sri Ram)! I am a minister of Sugriv and the son of the Wind God (23). I have taken birth from the womb of mother Anjani and am famous by the name of Hanuman. Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! You should make friends with Sugriv (24). He will be of help to you to kill the one who has stolen your wife. Come, if you wish, we shall go to him (25).

श्रीराम उवाच

अहमप्यागतस्तेन सख्यं कर्तुं कपीश्वर। सख्युस्तस्यापि यत्कार्यं तत्करिष्याम्यसंशयम्।। 26।।
हनूमान् स्वस्वरूपेण स्थितो राममथाब्रवीत्। आरोहतां मम स्कन्धौ गच्छामः पर्वतोपरि।। 27।।
यत्र तिष्ठति सुग्रीवो मन्त्रिभिर्वालिनो भयात्। तथेति तस्यारुरोह स्कन्धं रामोऽथ लक्ष्मणः।। 28।।

śrīrāma uvāca

ahamapyāgatastena sakhyaṃ kartuṃ kapīśvara /
sakhyustasyāpi yatkāryaṃ tatkariṣyāmyasaṃśayam //
hanumān svasvarūpeṇa sthito rāmamathābravīt /
ārohatāṃ mama skandhau gacchāmaḥ parvatopari //
yatra tiṣṭhati sugrīvo mantribhirvālino bhayāt /
tatheti tasyāruroha skandhaṃ rāmo'tha lakṣmaṇaḥ //

Sri Ram answered, 'Oh the Lord of monkeys! I too have come to befriend him (Sugriv). I will also do any work of that friend if there is

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any that he wants me to do for him. There is no doubt about it' (26). Hearing this, Hanuman reverted back to his original form and said to Sri Ram, 'Both of you sit on my shoulders. Then we shall go up the mountain (27) where Sugriv along with his ministers keeps hiding out of fear of Vaali'. Saying 'alright', Sri Ram and Laxman strode upon (mounted) his shoulders (28).

उत्पपात गिरेर्मूर्ध्नि क्षणादेव महाकपिः। वृक्षच्छायां समाश्रित्य स्थितौ तौ रामलक्ष्मणौ ।। 29 ।।
हनूमानपि सुग्रीवमुपगम्य कृताञ्जलिः। व्येतु ते भयमायातौ राजन् श्रीरामलक्ष्मणौ ।। 30 ।।
शीघ्रमुत्तिष्ठ रामेण सख्यं ते योजितं मया। अग्निं साक्षिणमारोप्य तेन सख्यं द्रुतं कुरु ।। 31 ।।

utpapāta girermūrdhni kṣaṇādeva mahākapiḥ /
vṛkṣacchāyāṃ samāśritya sthitau tau rāmalakṣmaṇau //
hanūmānapi sugrīvamupagamya kṛtāñjaliḥ /
vyetu te bhayamāyātau rājan śrīrāmalakṣmaṇau //
śīghramuttiṣṭha rāmeṇa sakhyaṃ te yojitaṃ mayā /
agniṃ sākṣiṇamāropya tena sakhyaṃ drutaṃ kuru //

The great Lord of monkeys jumped (leapt up) to reach the summit of the mountain in a flash. There, Sri Ram and Laxman stood under the shade of a tree (29). Hanuman went near Sugriv and said to him with palms joined together in submission—'Oh king! Remove your doubts and suspicions because Sri Ram and Laxman have come to visit you (as a friend) (30). Get up quickly. I have arranged for your friendship with Sri Ram. Make friends with him soon with the sacred fire as a witness (31).

ततोऽतिहर्षात्सुग्रीवः समागम्य रघूत्तमम्। वृक्षशाखां स्वयं छित्त्वा विष्टराय ददौ मुदा ।। 32 ।।
हनूमाँल्लक्ष्मणायादात्सुग्रीवाय च लक्ष्मणः। हर्षेण महताविष्टाः सर्व एवावतस्थिरे ।। 33 ।।
लक्ष्मणस्त्वब्रवीत्सर्वं रामवृत्तान्तमादितः। वनवासाभिगमनं सीताहरणमेव च ।। 34 ।।

tato'tiharṣātsugrīvaḥ samāgamya raghūttamam /
vṛkṣaśākhāṃ svayaṃ chitvā viṣṭarāya dadau mudā //
hanūmāṁllakṣmaṇāyādātsugrīvāya ca lakṣmaṇaḥ /
harṣeṇa mahatāviṣṭāḥ sarva evāvatasthire //
lakṣmaṇastvabravītsarvaṃ rāmavṛttāntamāditaḥ /
vanavāsābhigamanaṃ sītāhareṇameva ca //

Then Sugriv was very happy and delightfully came to meet Sri Ram. He broke a branch of a tree with his own hands and gave it to him (Sri Ram) to sit upon (32). Similarly Hanuman gave a seat to

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Laxman, and Laxman reciprocated the gesture by giving a seat for Sugriv. Everyone sat down on their respective seats happily, cheerfully and comfortably (33). Thence, Laxman narrated the whole story of Sri Ram from the beginning to their coming to the forest for residence and the subsequent abduction of Sita from there (34).

लक्ष्मणोक्तं वचः श्रुत्वा सुग्रीवो राममब्रवीत्। अहं करिष्ये राजेन्द्र सीतायाः परिमार्गणम्।। 35।।
साहाय्यमपि ते राम करिष्ये शत्रुघातिनः। शृणु राम मया दृष्टं किञ्चित्ते कथयाम्यहम्।।36।।

lakṣmaṇoktaṃ vacaḥ śrutvā sugrīvo rāmamabravīt /
ahaṃ kariṣye rājendra sītāyāḥ parimārgaṇam //
sahāyyamapi te rāma kariṣye śatrughātinaḥ /
śṛṇu rāma mayā dṛṣṭaṃ kiñcitte kathayāmyaham //

Hearing the words of Laxman, Sugriv said to Sri Ram, 'Oh the King of kings! I shall search for Sita (35), and I shall also help you in conquering and slaying your enemy. Oh Sri Ram! I shall now tell you all that I have seen myself. Listen (36)—

एकदा मन्त्रिभिः सार्धं स्थितोऽहं गिरिमूर्धनि। विहायसा नीयमानां केनचित्प्रमदोत्तमाम्।। 37।।
क्रोशन्तीं रामरामेति दृष्ट्वास्मान्पर्वतोपरि। आमुच्याभरणान्याशु स्वोत्तरीयेण भामिनी।।38।।
निरीक्ष्याधः परित्यज्य क्रोशन्ती तेन रक्षसा। नीताहं भूषणान्याशु गुहायामक्षिपं प्रभो।।39।।

ekadā mantribhiḥ sārdhaṃ sthito'haṃ girimūrdhani /
vihāyasā nīyamānāṃ kenacitpramadottamām //
krośantīṃ rāmarāmeti dṛṣṭvāsmānparvatopari /
āmucyābharaṇānyāśu svottarīyeṇa bhāminī //
nirīkṣyādhaḥ parityajya krośantī tena rakṣasā /
nītāhaṃ bhūṣaṇānyāśu guhāyāmakṣipaṃ prabho //

One day I was sitting with my ministers on the top of the mountain. At that time we saw that some demon was taking away some most attractive and charming woman by the path of the sky (37). That lady was woefully wailing and crying aloud 'Ram, Ram'. Seeing us sitting atop the mountain, she took off her ornaments, tied them in a cloth (probably her scarf), and seeing us, she threw it down. Oh Lord! In this way, that demon took away that gentle lady who was constantly and woefully lamenting and wailing miserably. I immediately picked up those ornaments and kept it aside (i.e. hid them) in a mountain cave (38-39).

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इदानीमपि पश्य त्वं जानीहि तव वा न वा। इत्युक्त्वानीय रामाय दर्शयामास वानरः।। 40।।
विमुच्य रामस्तद्दृष्ट्वा हा सीतेति मुहुर्मुहुः। हृदि निक्षिप्य तत्सर्वं रुरोद प्राकृतो यथा।। 41।।

idānīmapi paśya tvaṃ jānīhi tava vā na vā/
ityuktvānīya rāmāya darśayāmāsa vānaraḥ//
vimucya rāmastaddṛṣṭvā hā sīteti muhurmuhuḥ/
hṛdi nikṣipya tatsarvaṃ ruroda prākṛto yathā//

You must have a look at them and see if they are yours or not'.

Saying this, the monkey (Sugriv) brought them and showed them to Sri Ram (40). When Sri Ram opened the bundle and saw the ornaments, he immediately recognised them and clasped them to his heart. Like an ordinary man, he began crying, saying repeatedly 'Oh Sita, Oh Sita!' (41).

आश्वास्य राघवं भ्राता लक्ष्मणो वाक्यमब्रवीत्। अचिरेणैव ते राम प्राप्यते जानकी शुभा।
वानरेन्द्रसहायेन हत्वा रावणमाहवे।। 42।।
सुग्रीवोऽप्याह हे राम प्रतिज्ञां करवाणि ते। समरे रावणं हत्वा तव दास्यामि जानकीम्।। 43।।

aśvāsya rāghavaṃ bhrātā lakṣmaṇo vākyamabravīt/
acireṇaiva te rāma prāpyate jānakī śubhā/
vānarendrasahāyena hatvā rāvaṇamāhave//
sugrīvo'pyāha he rāma pratijñāṃ karavāṇi te/
samare rāvaṇaṃ hatvā tava dāsyāmi jānakīm//

Then brother Laxman consoled him, saying—'Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! With the help of the king of monkeys, you shall kill Ravana in the war soon and retrieve the auspicious Janki (Sita)' (42). Sugriv also reassured Sri Ram, saying 'Oh Sri Ram! I make a promise to you that I shall get Sita back to you by killing Ravana in the war' (43).

ततो हनूमान्प्रज्वाल्य तयोरग्निं समीपतः। तावुभौ रामसुग्रीवावग्नौ साक्षिणि तिष्ठति।। 44।।
बाहू प्रसार्य चालिङ्ग्य परस्परमकल्मषौ। समीपे रघुनाथस्य सुग्रीवः समुपाविशत्।। 45।।

tato hanūmānprajvālya tayoragniṃ samīpataḥ/
tāvubhau rāmasugrīvāvagnau sākṣiṇi tiṣṭhati//
bāhū prasārya cāliṅgya parasparamakalmaṣau/
samīpe raghunāthasya sugrīvaḥ samupāviśat//

Then Hanuman lit a sacred fire near them. Both Sri Ram and Sugriv made the sacred fire as a witness (44) and once again formally met

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(i.e. embraced) each other with wide open arms. Thereafter, Sugriv sat down near Sri Ram. (45).

[Note—Earlier, before the ritual of making friendship with fire as a witness, Sugriv sat in front of Sri Ram. But, after their friendship was formalised, Sugriv sat by the side of Sri Ram. This indicates closeness and formalisation of their relationship as friends]

स्वोदन्तं कथयामास प्रणयाद्रघुनायके। सखे शृणु ममोदन्तं वालिना यत्कृतं पुरा।। 46।।
मयपुत्रोऽथ मायावी नाम्ना परमदुर्मदः। किष्किन्धां समुपागत्य वालिनं समुपाह्वयत्।। 47।।

svodantaṃ kathayāmāsa praṇayādraghunāyake /
sakhe śṛṇu mamodantaṃ vālinā yatkṛtaṃ purā //
mayaputro'tha māyāvī nāmnā paramadurmadaḥ /
kiṣkindhāṃ samupāgatya vālinaṃ samupāhvayat //

Then Sugriv seized the moment and most affectionately began to narrate his own story of woes to him (Sri Ram). He said, 'Oh friend! Listen to my story now. I shall tell you what Vaali has done to me earlier (46). Once the highly haughty and arrogant son of the demon Mai called Mayavi came to Kishkindha Puri (the capital of the monkey race) and challenged Vaali for a duel (47).

सिंहनादेन महता वाली तु तदमर्षणः। निर्ययौ क्रोधताम्राक्षो जघान दृढमुष्टिना।। 48।।
दुद्राव तेन संविग्नो जगाम स्वगुहां प्रति। अनुदुद्राव तं वाली मायाविनमहं तथा।। 49।।

siṃhanādena mahatā vālī tu tadamarṣaṇaḥ /
niryayau krodhatāmrākṣo jaghāna dṛḍhamuṣṭinā //
dudrāva tena saṃvigno jagāma svaguhāṃ prati /
anududrāva taṃ vālī māyāvinamahaṃ tathā //

He (Mayavi) roared like a lion. Vaali could not tolerate his haughtiness and challenge. His eyes became red with anger, and coming out, he gave the demon a fierce punch (48). Gravely hurt and agitated by that blow, Mayavi ran towards a cave. Then both Vaali and I pursued him (49).

ततः प्रविष्टमालोक्य गुहां मायाविनं रुषा। वाली मामाह तिष्ठ त्वं बहिर्गच्छाम्यहं गुहाम्।
इत्युक्त्वाविश्य स गुहां मासमेकं न निर्ययौ।। 50।।

tataḥ praviṣṭamālokya guhāṃ māyāvinaṃ ruṣā /
vālī māmāha tiṣṭha tvaṃ bahirgacchāmyahaṃ guhām /
ityuktvāviśya sa guhāṃ māsamekaṃ na niryayau //

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Seeing that Mayavi had entered the cave, Vaali was very furious, and he said to me, 'You stay here outside the cave. I am going inside to pursue him'. Saying this he entered the cave and did not come out of it for one full month (50).

मासादूर्ध्वं गुहाद्वारान्निर्गतं रुधिरं बहु। तद्दृष्ट्वा परितप्ताङ्गो मृतो वालीति दुःखितः।। 51।।
गुहाद्वारि शिलामेकां निधाय गृहमागतः। ततोऽब्रवं मृतो वाली गुहायां रक्षसा हतः।। 52।।

māsādūrdhvaṃ guhādvārānnirgataṃ rudhiraṃ bahu /
taddṛṣṭvā paritaptāṅgo mṛto vālīti duḥkhitaḥ //
guhādvāri śilāmekāṃ nidhāya gṛhamāgataḥ /
tato'bravaṃ mṛto vālī guhāyāṃ rakṣasā hataḥ //

At the end of one month, a lot of blood came out (i.e. seeped out) of the mouth of the cave. Seeing it, and thinking that Vaali has been killed by the demon, I was very sad and anguished (51). Then (fearing that the colossus demon would come out after having killed Vaali and will kill me as well), I put a large boulder on the mouth of the cave to shut it. I returned home and told everybody that Vaali has been killed at the hands of the demon inside the cave (52).

तच्छ्रुत्वा दुःखिताः सर्वे मामनिच्छन्तमप्युत। राज्येऽभिषेचनं चक्रुः सर्वे वानरमन्त्रिणः।। 53।।
शिष्टं तदा मया राज्यं किञ्चित्कालमरिन्दम। ततः समागतो वाली मामाह परुषं रुषा।। 54।।

tacchrutvā duḥkhitāḥ sarve māmanicchantamapyuta /
rājye'bhiṣecanaṃ cakruḥ sarve vānaramantriṇaḥ //
śiṣṭaṃ tadā mayā rājyaṃ kiñcitkālamarindama /
tataḥ samāgato vālī māmāha paruṣaṃ ruṣā //

Hearing this, everyone was very sad and remorseful, and though I had no desire or interest, all the monkey ministers in cabinet put me on the throne (against my will) and anointed me as the king of Kishkindha (53). I could rule only for a short time when Vaali came back after having killed the demon, and (when he saw me on the throne, he) said many spiteful, acrimonious, bitter and reprehensible words to me in scorn and vehemence. He fretted and was furious with anger and wrath (54).

बहुधा भर्त्सयित्वा मां निजघान च मुष्टिभिः। ततो निर्गत्य नगरादधावं परया भिया।। 55।।
लोकान् सर्वान्परिक्रम्य ऋष्यमूकं समाश्रितः। ऋषेः शापभयात्सोऽपि नायातीमं गिरिं प्रभो।। 56।।

bahudhā bhartsayitvā māṃ nijaghāna ca muṣṭibhiḥ /
tato nirgatya nagarādadhāvaṃ parayā bhiyā //

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lokān sarvānparikramya ṛṣyamūkaṃ samāśritaḥ /
ṛṣeḥ śāpabhayātso'pi nāyātīmaṃ giriṃ prabho //

In this way, having said a lot of critical, taunting, caustic, ignominious and reproachful things to me, he began beating me mercilessly with fist-blows. Then I was so scared that I ran away from the city (55). Oh Lord! After wondering in all the worlds (i.e. at different places), I at last took shelter in this Rishyamook mountain, because he does not dare to come here out of fear of a sage's curse (see verse nos. 66-67) (56).

[Note :—Vaali-Sugriv enmity is a classic example of misunderstanding and misgiving between brothers, leading to souring of their relationship for ever and its accompanying bitter consequences. On close examination we see that neither of the brothers was guilty of misdeed, for Sugriv had no intention of usurping his brother's crown and was appointed on the throne by his ministers against his will, and Vaali had acted as he did because anyone in his place is bound to think that his brother has cheated him. The only mistake that they both made is that Sugriv should have waited for some more time to confirm Vaali's death and should not have been in such a tearing hurry to ascend the throne, while Vaali should have given his brother a hearing to determine the fact. But it must be realised that this is exactly the cocktail that leads to misunderstanding. This is a typical example and lesson to learn that before acting inimically with anyone, a person should first double check the facts and take action after cool consideration of all options.]

तदादि मम भार्यां स स्वयं भुङ्क्ते विमूढधीः। अतो दुःखेन सन्तप्तो हृतदारो हृताश्रयः ।। 57 ।।
वसाम्यद्य भवत्पादसंस्पर्शात्सुखितोऽस्म्यहम्। मित्रदुःखेन सन्तप्तो रामो राजीवलोचनः ।। 58 ।।
हनिष्यामि तव द्वेष्यं शीघ्रं भार्यापहारिणम्। इति प्रतिज्ञामकरोत्सुग्रीवस्य पुरस्तदा ।। 59 ।।

tadādi mama bhāryāṃ sa svayaṃ bhuṅkte vimūḍhadhīḥ /
ato duḥkhena santapto hṛtadāro hṛtāśrayaḥ //
vasāmyadya bhavatpādasaṃsparśātsukhito'smyaham /
mitraduḥkhena santapto rāmo rājīvalocanaḥ //
haniṣyāmi tava dveṣyaṃ śīghraṃ bhāryāpahāriṇam /
iti pratijñāmakarotsugrīvasya purastadā //

Since then, this evil fool enjoys my wife, while I stay here myself mentally anguished and tormented (57). By touching your lotus-feet today, I am a little consoled and feel reassured'.

Then the lotus-eyed Sri Ram, being anguished and moved by the sorrows of his friend Sugriv (58), made a promise to him, 'I shall very

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soon destroy your enemy who keeps ill-will, malice and enmity with you, and who has usurped your wife' (59).

[Note—Sri Ram could empathize with Sugriv because he has known the pain of being deprived of the kingdom and the agony that one goes through when his dear wife is taken away forcefully by someone else. Strategically also, the alliance was beneficial for both Sugriv and Sri Ram. The Lord wished to oblige Sugriv so that he would be morally bound to help him.]

सुग्रीवोऽप्याह राजेन्द्र वाली बलवतां बली। कथं हनिष्यति भवान्देवैरपि दुरासदम्।। 60।।
शृणु ते कथयिष्यामि तद्बलं बलिनां वर। कदाचिददुन्दुभिर्नाम महाकायो महाबलः।।61।।
किष्किन्धामगमद्राम महामहिषरूपधृक्। युद्धाय वालिनं रात्रौ समाह्वयत भीषणः।।62।।

sugrīvo'pyāha rājendra vālī balavatāṃ balī/
kathaṃ haniṣyati bhavāndevairapi durāsadam//
śṛṇu te kathayiṣyāmi tadbalaṃ balināṃ vara/
kadāciddundubhirnāma mahākāyo mahābalaḥ//
kiṣkindhāmagamadrāma mahāmahiṣarūpadhṛk/
yuddhāya vālinaṃ rātrau samāhvayata bhīṣaṇaḥ//

Sugriv said, 'Oh Rajendra (King of kings; i.e. Sri Ram)! Vaali is very strong and superior to all other warriors. To defeat him is difficult for the Gods too. Then how will you kill him? (60).

Oh the most strong and valorous one (Sri Ram)! Listen. I shall tell you the story related to his strength. Once a colossus and very brave demon called Dundubhi (61) came to the city of Kishkindha, disguised as a wild buffalo. That most formidable demon challenged Vaali for a duel during the night (62).

तच्छ्रुत्वासहमानोऽसौ वाली परमकोपनः। महिषं शृङ्गयोर्धृत्वा पातयामास भूतले।। 63।।
पादेनैकेन तत्कायमाक्रम्यास्य शिरो महत्। हस्ताभ्यां भ्रामयंश्छित्त्वा तोलयित्वाक्षिपद्भुवि।।64।।

tacchrutvāsahamāno'sau vālī paramakopanaḥ/
mahiṣaṃ śṛṅgayordhṛtvā pātayāmāsa bhūtale//
pādenaikena tatkāyamākramyāsya śiro mahat/
hastābhyāṃ bhrāmayaṃśchittvā tolayitvākṣipadbhuvi//

Vaali could not tolerate his challenging roar, and he angrily caught hold of that buffalo's horns and dashed it to the ground (63), pressed one leg against his body, twisted his large head and broke it, and then flung it to the ground far away (64).

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पपात तच्छिरो राम मातङ्गाश्रमसन्निधौ। योजनात्पतितं तस्मान्मुनेराश्रममण्डले।।65।।
रक्तवृष्टिः पपातोच्चैर्दृष्ट्वा तां क्रोधमूर्छितः। मातङ्गो वालिनं प्राह यद्यागन्तासि मे गिरिम्।।66।।
इतः परं भग्नशिरा मरिष्यसि न संशयः। एवं शप्तस्तदारभ्य ऋष्यमूकं न यात्यसौ।।67।।

papāta tacchiro rāma mātaṅgāśramasannidhau/
yojanātpatitaṃ tasmānmunerāśramamaṇḍale//
raktavṛṣṭiḥ papātoccairdṛṣṭvā tāṃ krodhamūrcchitaḥ/
mātaṅgo vālinaṃ prāha yadyāgantāsi me girim//
itaḥ paraṃ bhagnaśirā mariṣyasi na saṃśayaḥ/
evaṃ śaptastadārabhya ṛṣyamūkaṃ na yātyasau//

Oh Sri Ram! It (i.e. the severed head of Dundubhi) went one Yojan (appx. 8 miles) away and fell near the hermitage of sage Matang which was located amongst the cluster of other hermitages (65). A lot of blood rained down upon the ground of the sage's hermitage from the severed head. Seeing the blood, sage Matang was very peeved and annoyed; he felt very offended. He wrathfully cursed Vaali—'If today onwards you ever happen to come on this mountain (66), your head would split and you would die instantly—there is no doubt about it. It is because of this mortal fear (of the sage's curse) that he does not venture near Rishyamook (67).

एतज्ज्ञात्वाहमप्यत्र वसामि भयवर्जितः। राम पश्य शिरस्तस्य दुन्दुभेः पर्वतोपमम्।।68।।
तत्क्षेपणे यदा शक्तः शक्तस्त्वं वालिनो वधे। इत्युक्त्वा दर्शयामास शिरस्तद्गिरिसन्निभम्।।69।।

etajjñātvāhamapyatra vasāmi bhayavarjitaḥ/
rāma paśya śirastasya dundubheḥ parvatopamam//
tatkṣepaṇe yadā śaktaḥ śaktastvaṃ vālino vadhe/
ityuktvā darśayāmāsa śirastadgirisannibham//

Aware of this, I stay here without any fear from his side. Oh Sri Ram! Just have a look at the skull of that demon Dundubhi. It is huge like a mountain (68). If you are able to throw it away from here, then surely you will be able to slay Vaali because you would have proved your prowess and matching strength by doing so'.

Saying this, Sugriv showed him that mountain-like heap of bones representing Dundubhi's skull (69).

दृष्ट्वा रामः स्मितं कृत्वा पादाङ्गुष्ठेन चाक्षिपत्। दशयोजनपर्यन्तं तदद्भुतमिवाभवत्।।70।।
साधु साध्विति सम्प्राह सुग्रीवो मन्त्रिभिः सह। पुनरप्याह सुग्रीवो रामं भक्तपरायणम्।।71।।
एते ताला महासाराः सप्त पश्य रघूत्तम। एकैकं चालयित्वासौ निष्पत्रान्कुरुतेऽञ्जसा।।72।।

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dṛṣṭvā rāmaḥ smitaṃ kṛtvā pādāṅguṣṭhena cākṣipat /
daśayojanaparyantaṃ tadadbhūtamivābhavat //
sādhu sādhviti samprāha sugrīvo mantribhiḥ saha /
punarapyāha sugrīvo rāmaṃ bhaktaparāyaṇam //
ete tālā mahāsārāḥ sapta paśya raghūttama /
ekaikaṃ cālayitvāsau niṣpatrāṅkurute'ñjasā //

Sri Ram saw it and flung it ten Yojans away (i.e. appx. 8 × 10 = 80 miles) with the great toe of his feet. This was a marvelous feat of great wonder, such as the kind never witnessed before (70). Even Sugriv, along with his ministers, could not believe his eyes, and they exulted in astonishment, applauding and exclaiming in jubilation, 'Great, great, a marvelous and wondrous deed indeed!' Then Sugriv said to Sri Ram who is the only shelter and succour for his devotees (71)—'Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! These seven coconut trees are so sturdy, but Vaali shakes each of them without any rhyme or reason (to scare me and vent his ire against me), making them leafless in the process (72).

यदि त्वमेकबाणेन विद्ध्वा छिद्रं करोषि चेत्। हतस्त्वया तदा वाली विश्वासो मे प्रजायते।
तथेति धनुरादाय सायकं तत्र सन्दधे ।। 73 ।।
बिभेद च तदा रामः सप्त तालान्महाबलः। तालान्सप्त विनिर्भिद्य गिरिं भूमिं च सायकः ।। 74 ।।
पुनरागत्य रामस्य तूणीरे पूर्ववत्स्थितः। ततोऽतिहर्षात्सुग्रीवो राममाहातिविस्मितः ।। 75 ।।

yadi tvamekabāṇena viddhvā chidraṃ karoṣi cet /
hatastvayā tadā vālī viśvāso me prajāyate /
tatheti dhanurādāya sāyakaṃ tatra sandadhe //
bibheda ca tadā rāmaḥ sapta tālānmahābalaḥ /
tālānsapta vinirbhidya giriṃ bhūmiṃ ca sāyakaḥ //
punarāgatya rāmasya tūṇīre pūrvavatsthitaḥ /
tato'tiharṣātsugrīvo rāmamāhātivismitaḥ //

If you can pierce a hole in each of them with a single arrow, then I will be convinced that you can surely kill Vaali'.

Saying 'alright', the most expert archer (Sri Ram) took his bow and aimed an arrow at it (73). He pierced those seven sturdy coconut trees effortlessly. After that, the arrow pierced and passed through the seven legendary lakes, the mountains and the earth (74) before returning to his quiver once again. Sugriv was extremely astonished at the spectacular feat and he cheerfully said to Sri Ram (75)—

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देव त्वं जगतां नाथः परमात्मा न संशयः। मत्पूर्वकृतपुण्यौघैः सङ्गतोऽद्य मया सह।। 76।।
त्वां भजन्ति महात्मानः संसारविनिवृत्तये। त्वां प्राप्य मोक्षसचिवं प्रार्थयेऽहं कथं भवम्।। 77।।

deva tvaṃ jagatāṃ nāthaḥ paramātmā na saṃśayaḥ/
matpūrvakṛtapuṇyaughaiḥ saṅgato'dya mayā saha//
tvāṃ bhajanti mahātmānaḥ saṃsāravinivṛttaye/
tvāṃ prāpya mokṣasacivaṃ prārthaye'haṃ kathaṃ bhavam//

'Oh Lord! There is no doubt that you are the Parmatma (supreme Lord) himself who is the Lord of the whole world. It is because of the ripening (maturing, fruition) of all my good, righteous and noble deeds done in the past that I have been able to come in contact with you (76). Great souls worship and adore you for getting liberation from the shackles of this (mundane, deluding, artificial, transient, treacherous, entangling and entrapping web represented by the) world, then say how can I ever wish for worldly materials and comforts once I have personally met you who bestows emancipation and salvation? [That is, since you remove a person away from worldly attachments and allurements, how can I ask you for such things; it would be highly absurd, foolish and incongruous for me!] (77).

दाराः पुत्रा धनं राज्यं सर्वं त्वन्मायया कृतम्। अतोऽहं देवदेवेश नाकाङ्क्षेऽन्यत्प्रसीद मे।। 78।।
आनन्दानुभवं त्वाद्य प्राप्तोऽहं भाग्यगौरवात्। मृदर्थं यतमानेन निधानमिव सत्पते।। 79।।

dārāḥ putrā dhanaṃ rājyaṃ sarvaṃ tvanmāyayā kṛtam/
ato'haṃ devadeveśa nākāṅkṣe'nyatprasīda me//
ānandānubhavaṃ tvādya prāpto'haṃ bhāgyagauravāt/
mṛdarthaṃ yatamānena nidhānamiva satpate//

Oh the Lord of all the Gods! All this—wife, son, wealth, kingdom etc.—are the creation of your Maya (deluding powers that hold everyone in its spell of magical charm). Hence, I do not have any desire for anything in this world besides you; have grace, benediction and benevolence upon me (78). Oh the truthful Lord (Sri Ram)! You are an image of bliss, happiness, contentedness, peace and tranquility. Even as a fortunate one finds a treasure trove while digging the ground, I am similarly very fortunate to have your divine view (Darshan) today (79).

अनाद्यविद्यासंसिद्धं बन्धनं छिन्नमद्य नः। यज्ञदानतपःकर्मपूर्तेष्टादिभिरप्यसौ।। 80।।
न जीर्यते पुनर्दार्ढ्यं भजते संसृतिः प्रभो। त्वत्पाददर्शनात्सद्यो नाशमेति न संशयः।। 81।।

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anādyavidyāsaṃsiddhaṃ bandhanaṃ chinnamadya naḥ /
yajñadānatapaḥkarmapūrteṣṭādibhirapyasau //
na jīryate punardārḍhyaṃ bhajate saṃsṛtiḥ prabho /
tvatpādadarśanātsadyo nāśameti na saṃśayaḥ //

My ties (fetters, shackles, entrapments) originating from ignorance and delusions from times immemorial have been cut (i.e. eliminated, removed)[2] today. This shackle that ties a creature to the (mundane, deluding, artificial, transient, entangling and treacherous) world is not broken (or eliminated, removed) even by the means of doing Yagya (religious sacrifices), doing Daan (giving charities, alms, donations), and doing Tapa (austerities and penances, suffering hardships for spiritual pursuits), as well as upon fulfillment of desires etc. (80).

On the contrary, they go on progressively becoming more stubborn, robust and strong. But they are destroyed as soon as one has divine Darshan of your holy lotus-feet—there is no doubt about it (81).

क्षणार्धमपि यच्चित्तं त्वयि तिष्ठत्यचञ्चलम्। तस्याज्ञानमनर्थानां मूलं नश्यति तत्क्षणात्।। 82 ।।
तत्तिष्ठतु मनो राम त्वयि नान्यत्र मे सदा।। 83 ।।

kṣaṇārdhamapi yaccittaṃ tvayi tiṣṭhatyacañcalam /
tasyājñānamanarthānāṃ mūlaṃ naśyati tatkṣaṇāt //
tattiṣṭhatu mano rāma tvayi nānyatra me sadā //

He, whose mind, heart and intellect becomes fixed (i.e. steadfast, unwavering and concentrated) upon your true form and nature even for half-a-moment, his ignorance, which is the root cause of all misfortunes, calamities, tragedies and uncalled for and unwarranted consequences are destroyed instantly (82).

Hence, oh Sri Ram, bless me that my mind-heart apparatus should always be following you, should remain engrossed or involved in your constant thoughts, and it should not leave you and wander anywhere else (83).

रामरामेति यद्वाणी मधुरं गायति क्षणम्। स ब्रह्महा सुरापो वा मुच्यते सर्वपातकैः।। 84 ।।
न काङ्क्षे विजयं राम न च दारसुखादिकम्। भक्तिमेव सदाकाङ्क्षे त्वयि बन्धविमोचनीम्।।85।।

rāmarāmeti yadvāṇī madhuraṃ gāyati kṣaṇam /
sa brahmahā surāpo vā mucyate sarvapātakaiḥ //
na kāṅkṣe vijayaṃ rāma na ca dārasukhādikam /
bhaktimeva sadākāṅkṣe tvayi bandhavimocanīm //

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Those whose tongue sings or chants 'Ram, Ram' sweetly even for a moment, they are freed from all the sinful consequences of being killers of Brahmins or being indulgent drunkards (84).

Oh Sri Ram! I do not have the desire to win over Vaali anymore or retrieve my wife or any other comforts and pleasures now. The only thing which I desire now is your Bhakti (devotion, submission, dedication, worship, faith, adoration, conviction etc. in you) that cuts through (destroys, eliminates) the ties of this world that act as fetters which shackle and pillory me in their vice like grip (85).

[Note to verse 84 :—It means that even those who are most corrupt, pervert and sinful, and have committed such abhorable crimes as murder and such lowly act as drinking and indulgences, can be absolved of their sins and misdemeanors by sincerely repeating the holy name of the Lord which is all-purifying. Now, this does not mean that the same crime is committed over and over again. The remit is possible only when the regret, confession, contrition and penitence for the sin is sincere, and one wants to do an honest and sincere atonement for his misdemeanors by way of chanting the holy name of Sri Ram to cleanse the dirt from his consciousness. Otherwise, it is an act in futility and is nothing less then cheating oneself and the world; it is deceit and impostering.]

त्वन्मायाकृतसंसारस्त्वदंशोऽहं रघूत्तम। स्वपादभक्तिमादिश्य त्राहि मां भवसङ्कटात्।।86।।
पूर्वं मित्रार्युदासीनास्त्वन्मायावृतचेतसः। आसन्मेऽद्य भवत्पाददर्शनादेव राघव।।87।।
सर्वं ब्रह्मैव मे भाति क्व मित्रं क्व च मे रिपुः। यावत्त्वन्मायया बद्धस्तावद्गुणविशेषता।।88।।

tvanmāyākṛtasaṃsārastvadaṃśo'haṃ raghūttama /
svapādabhaktimādiśya trāhi māṃ bhavasaṅkaṭāt //
pūrvaṃ mitrāryudāsīnāstvanmāyāvṛtacetasaḥ /
āsanme'dya bhavatpādadarśanādeva rāghava //
sarvaṃ brahmaiva me bhāti kva mitraṃ kva ca me ripuḥ /
yāvattvanmāyayā baddhastāvadguṇaviśeṣatā //

Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! This world is the apparent creation (manifestation) of your Maya (deluding powers as well as the cosmic creative energy), and me, too, is but only your fraction (i.e. an image of your true self). Hence, by giving/bestowing/granting to me devotion and faith in your holy feet, you can save me from the horrors and torments of this horrifying (deluding, entrapping and tormenting mundane) world (86).

In the beginning, when my mind-intellect-heart complex was surrounded (enveloped, covered, encased, sheathed) by your Maya, I

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distinguished between those who were my friend, my foe and who were neutral. But, oh Raghav, now that I have seen the holy feet of the Lord (87), all are experienced or perceived by me as an image or an embodiment of the supreme, transcendental Brahm (the Supreme Being). Who is my friend and who is my enemy in this world? As long as the creature is tied to your Maya (delusions, ignorance), he is affected by the effects of the 3 qualities of Satva etc. (the others being Raj and Tam) (88).

सा यावदस्ति नानात्वं तावद्भवति नान्यथा। यावन्नानात्वमज्ञानात्तावत्कालकृतं भयम्।। 89।।
अतोऽविद्यामुपास्ते यः सोऽन्धे तमसि मज्जति। मायामूलमिदं सर्वं पुत्रदारादिबन्धनम्।
तदुत्सारय मायां त्वं दासीं तव रघूत्तम।। 90।।

sā yāvadasti nānātvaṃ tāvadbhavati nānyathā/
yāvannānātvamajñānāttāvatkālakṛtaṃ bhayam//
ato'vidyāmupāste yaḥ so'ndhe tamasi majjati/
māyāmūlamidaṃ sarvaṃ putradārādibandhanam/
tadutsāraya māyāṃ tvaṃ dāsīṃ tava raghūttama//

Only till the time the effects and influences of Maya (delusions, ignorance, misconceptions, hallucinations etc.) last does the distinction of a friend and a foe exist. As soon as it is removed, all differentiations vanish. As long as this distinction, originating out of ignorance, exists, only till then there is the fear of death (89).

This is why those persons who 'worship' ignorance (i.e. pursue or respect it, or believe it to be real, and pursue those things that have their existence due to ignorance, desire and yearn for such things) keep lying in great darkness. These worldly ties (attachments) of son and wife etc. are all due to ignorance, misconceptions and delusions.

Hence, oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! Remove this Maya—which is your maid servant (i.e. which is subservient to you, is under your command, is your subordinate Vassal)—from us (i.e. let us be free from its clutches) (90).

[Noet :—Verse nos. 87-90 describe the effects of Avidya or ignorance and lack of true knowledge vis-a-vis Vidya or wisdom, truthful knowledge and enlightenment.]

त्वत्पादपद्मार्पितचित्तवृत्तिस्त्वन्नामसङ्कीतकथासु वाणी।
त्वद्भक्तसेवानिरतौ करौ मे त्वदङ्गसङ्गं लभतां मदङ्गम्।। 91।।

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tvatpādapadmārpitacittavṛttistvannāmasaṅgītakathāsu vāṇī /
tvadbhaktasevāniratau karau me tvadaṅgasaṅgaṃ labhatāṃ madaṅgam //

The inclination (i.e. inherent and natural tendency) of my mind, heart and intellect should always be focused (transfixed, concentrated and unwaveringly engrossed and involved) in your lotus-like feet. My voice and faculty of speech should always be involved in singing your glorious and holy name, and narrating and discussing your divine stories and deeds. My hands should always be involved in the service of your devotees. My gross body should be in touch with you (i.e. on the excuse of serving your feet, I should always remain near your divine form) (91).

त्वन्मूर्तिभक्तान् स्वगुरुं च चक्षुः पश्यत्वजस्त्रं स शृणोति कर्णः।
त्वज्जन्मकर्माणि च पादयुग्मं व्रजत्वजस्त्रं तव मन्दिराणि।। 92।।

tvanmūrtibhaktān svaguruṃ ca cakṣūḥ
paśyatvajasraṃ sa śṛṇoti karṇaḥ /
tvajjanmakarmāṇi ca pādayugmaṃ
vrajatvajasraṃ tava mandirāṇi //

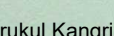
My eyes should always behold your divine image, your devotees and my Guru (moral teacher). My ears should always hear about the various marvelous worldly stories of your different incarnations. My legs should always go for pilgrimage (i.e. to your holy cities and temples) (92).

अङ्गानि ते पादरजोविमिश्रतीर्थानि बिभ्रत्वहिशत्रुकेतो।
शिरस्त्वदीयं भवपद्मजाद्यैर्जुष्टं पदं राम नमत्वजस्त्रम्।। 93।।

aṅgāni te pādarajovimiśratīrthāni bibhratvahiśatruketo /
śirastvadīyaṃ bhavapadmajādyairjuṣṭaṃ padaṃ rāma namatvajasram //

My body should bear the holy water containing the dust of your feet [this means that the 'Tilak' on my forehead should be made by a paste containing dust and water used to wash your holy feet]. Oh the one who rides on the Garud i.e. Lord Vishnu (or the one whose flag or standard has the mark of Garud, the legendary eagle or heron)! Let my body always bow before your feet which are worshipped, served and adored even by Lords Shiva, Brahma and other Gods (93).

[Note :—Verse nos. 77-93 can be called the gospel according to Sugriv.]



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Kishkindha Kand — Canto 2

Vaali's episode

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

इत्थं स्वात्मपरिष्वङ्गनिर्धूताशेषकल्मषम्। रामः सुग्रीवमालोक्य सस्मितं वाक्यमब्रवीत्।।1।।
मायां मोहकरीं तस्मिन्वितन्वन् कार्यसिद्धये। सखे त्वदुक्तं यत्तन्मां सत्यमेव न संशयः।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

itthaṃ svātmapariṣvaṅganirdhūtāśeṣakalmaṣam /
rāmaḥ sugrīvamālokya sasmitaṃ vākyamabravīt //
māyāṃ mohakarīṃ tasminvitanvan kāryasiddhaye /
sakhe tvaduktaṃ yattanmāṃ satyameva na saṃśayaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! In this manner, all the misfortunes and sins of Sugriv were removed (eliminated, destroyed) by his communion with Sri Ram (which is evident from what he said in Canto 1, verse nos. 77-93). But that would have hampered the Lord's scheme of things, so Sri Ram, in order to successfully implement his plans, cast a charming spell of his delusion creating magical powers, called Maya, on Sugriv by glancing at him with a bewitching, enchanting and enigmatic smile capable of enthralling the whole world, and said, 'Oh friend! Whatever you have said is true, without any doubt (1-2).

किन्तु लोका वदिष्यन्ति मामेव रघुनन्दनः। कृतवान्किं कपीन्द्राय सख्यं कृत्वाग्निसाक्षिकम्।।3।।
इति लोकापवादो मे भविष्यति न संशयः। तस्मादाह्वय भद्रं ते गत्वा युद्धाय वालिनम्।।4।।

kintu lokā vadiṣyanti māmevaṃ raghunandanaḥ /
kṛtavānkiṃ kapīndrāya sakhyaṃ kṛtvāgnisākṣikam //
iti lokāpavādo me bhaviṣyati na saṃśayaḥ /
tasmādāhvaya bhadraṃ te gatvā yuddhāya vālinam //

But (if you become dispassionate towards the kingdom and your wife, and treat Vaali as your friend, then) what will the people say—that Raghunandan had made friends with the king of monkeys with fire as a witness, but of what help was he to him? (3). This will cause ill-fame and a great deal of bad name and ignominy for me amongst the people—there is no doubt about it. You be blessed! Hence, you should go immediately and challenge Vaali for a duel (4).

[Note :—This is a clear example of how Maya had coaxed Sugriv to deviate

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from his proclaimed path of dispassion, renunciation and detachment, and instead indulge in the pursuit of the materialistic world. This is the reason why the crimes which he had committed—such as keeping Vaali's wife, indulging in sensual pleasures of this world after being made king, and even forgetting to do the work of Sri Ram once he was crowned on the throne of Kishkindha—were overlooked by Sri Ram. The Lord had known that Sugriv was not to be blamed for his misdemeanors because it was he who had inspired him to plunge in the world, though not in the way Sugriv had done once he got the taste of power and pelf. It also points to the fact that one should do as the Lord inspires him to act or behave and not try to interfere in the Lord's larger scheme of things, but be careful not to allow Maya to distract one from the chosen righteous path. Ultimately, it is the Lord's wish that shall prevail, so one must not try to act smart with his planning; but at the same time pray to the Lord to keep away his Maya from casting its nefarious designs on the unsuspecting creature.]

बाणेनैकेन तं हत्वा राज्ये त्वामभिषेचये। तथेति गत्वा सुग्रीवः किष्किन्धोपवनं द्रुतम्॥ 5॥
कृत्वा शब्दं महानादं तमाह्वयत वालिनम्। तच्छ्रुत्वा भ्रातृनिनदं रोषताम्रविलोचनः॥ 6॥
निर्जगाम गृहाच्छीघ्रं सुग्रीवो यत्र वानरः। तमापतन्तं सुग्रीवः शीघ्रं वक्षस्यताडयत्॥ 7॥

bāṇenaiken taṃ hatvā rājye tvāmabhiṣecaye/
tatheti gatvā sugrīvaḥ kiṣkindhopavanaṃ drutam//
kṛtvā śabdam mahānādaṃ tamāhvayata vālinam/
tacchrutvā bhrātṛninadaṃ roṣatāmravilocanaḥ//
nirjagāma gṛhācchīghraṃ sugrīvo yatra vānaraḥ/
tamāpatantaṃ sugrīvaḥ śīghraṃ vakṣasyatāḍayat//

I shall kill him (as promised to you) with a single arrow and anoint you on the throne'. Saying 'alright', Sugriv immediately went to the small forest (or a large garden) in the city of Kishkindha (5), and called out to (i.e. challenged) Vaali for a duel with a thunderous roar. As soon as Vaali heard the challenge of his brother, his eyes became red with anger (6). He stepped out of his residence (palace) instantly, and came forward to face Sugriv. On his arrival, the latter immediately struck a blow on his chest (7).

सुग्रीवमपि मुष्टिभ्यां जघान क्रोधमूर्च्छितः। वाली तमपि सुग्रीव एवं क्रुद्धौ परस्परम्॥ 8॥
अयुद्ध्येतामेकरूपौ दृष्ट्वा रामोऽतिविस्मितः। न मुमोच तदा बाणं सुग्रीववधशङ्कया॥ 9॥

sugrīvamapi muṣṭibhyāṃ jaghāna krodhamūrchitaḥ/
vālī tamapi sugrīva evaṃ kruddhau parasparam//

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ayuddhyetāmekarūpau dṛṣṭvā rāmo'tivismitaḥ /
na mumoca tadā bāṇaṃ sugrīvavadhaśaṅkayā //

At this temerity and audacious act of his younger brother, Vaali became furious with anger, and he retaliated by punching Sugriv twice with his fist, and Sugriv repulsed Vaali's blow. In this manner, both of them started fighting each other most aggressively and with no holds barred (8). They were so look-alikes that Sri Ram was confounded and very astonished when he saw both the brothers together (so much so that he could not recognise Vaali). Hence, afraid that Sugriv might be killed due to mistaken identity, he did not shoot the arrow (9).

[Note—The Lord did not kill Vaali to subtly warn Sugriv that he better be careful when dealing with him (Ram), and should not have any false pride of his strength and valour; Sugriv should remember that if he had managed to get rid of his enemy, it was because of Ram and not of his own accord. And if he starts acting smart with the Lord, then the same fate holds good for him too.]

ततो दुद्राव सुग्रीवो वमन् रक्तं भयाकुलः। वाली स्वभवनं यातः सुग्रीवो राममब्रवीत्।। 10 ।।
किं मां घातयसे राम शत्रुणा भ्रातृरूपिणा। यदि मद्धनने वाञ्छा त्वमेव जहि मां विभो।। 11 ।।
एवं मे प्रत्ययं कृत्वा सत्यवादिन् रघूत्तम। उपेक्षसे किमर्थं मां शरणागतवत्सल।। 12 ।।

tato dudrāva sugrīvo vaman raktaṃ bhayākulaḥ /
vālī svabhavanaṃ yātaḥ sugrīvo rāmamabravīt //
kiṃ māṃ ghātayase rāma śatruṇā bhrātṛrūpiṇā /
yadi maddhanane vāñchā tvameva jahi māṃ vibho //
evaṃ me pratyayaṃ kṛtvā satyavādin raghūttama /
upekṣase kimarthaṃ māṃ śaraṇāgatavatsala //

At last, Sugriv started vomiting blood and ran away from there most terrified, while Vaali went back home. Then Sugriv pleaded to Sri Ram (10), 'Oh Sri Ram! Do you want to get me killed at the hands of my enemy-like brother? Oh Vibho (an epithet for Vishnu, meaning omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal, almighty Lord)! If you are desirous of getting me killed, then you should do it yourself (11). Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! You are true to your words. Having assured me earlier of your protection, why do you neglect me now, though you are kind and gracious towards your refugees (or those who seek shelter at your feet, who are your followers, devotees, dependants and subordinates)?' (12).

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श्रुत्वा सुग्रीववचनं रामः साश्रुविलोचनः। आलिङ्ग्य मा स्म भैषीस्त्वं दृष्ट्वा वामेकरूपिणौ।। 13।।
मित्रघातित्वमाशङ्क्य मुक्तवान्सायकं न हि। इदानीमेव ते चिह्नं करिष्ये भ्रमशान्तये।। 14।।

śrutvā sugrīvavacanaṃ rāmaḥ sāśruvilocanaḥ/
āliṅgya mā sma bhaiṣīstvaṃ dṛṣṭvā vāmekarūpiṇau//
mitraghātitvamāśaṅkya muktavānsāyakaṃ na hi/
idānīmeva te cihnaṃ kariṣye bhramaśāntaye//

Hearing these plaintive words of Sugriv, Sri Ram embraced him and said with tearful eyes, 'Oh brother! Don't be afraid. Seeing both of you looking alike (13), I was in doubt, and did not shoot the arrow fearing that I might kill a friend. Now, to remove this doubt and confusion, I shall make a mark on your body (14).

गत्वाह्वय पुनः शत्रुं हतं द्रक्ष्यसि वालिनम्। रामोऽहं त्वां शपे भ्रातर्हनिष्यामि रिपुं क्षणात्।। 15।।
इत्याश्वास्य स सुग्रीवं रामो लक्ष्मणमब्रवीत्। सुग्रीवस्य गले पुष्पमालामामुच्य पुष्पिताम्।।16।।

gatvāhvaya punaḥ śatruṃ hataṃ drakṣyasi vālinam/
rāmo'haṃ tvāṃ śape bhrātarhaniṣyāmi ripuṃ kṣaṇāt//
ityāśvāsya sa sugrīvaṃ rāmo lakṣmaṇamabravīt/
sugrīvasya gale puṣpamālāmāmucya puṣpitām//

You go once again and call your enemy. This time you will surely see your enemy dead. Oh brother! I, Ram, say on oath to you that this time I shall definitely kill your enemy instantly' (15). Having reassured Sugriv in this manner, Sri Ram said to Laxman, 'Oh Laxman! Put a garland of flowers around the neck of Sugriv (16).

प्रेषयस्व महाभाग सुग्रीवं वालिनं प्रति। लक्ष्मणस्तु तदा बद्ध्वा गच्छ गच्छेति सादरम्।। 17।।
प्रेषयामास सुग्रीवं सोऽपि गत्वा तथाकरोत्। पुनरप्यद्भुतं शब्दं कृत्वा वालिनमाह्वयत्।।18।।

preṣayasva mahābhāga sugrīvaṃ vālinaṃ prati/
lakṣmaṇastu tadā baddhvā gaccha gaccheti sādaram//
preṣayāmāsa sugrīvaṃ so'pi gatvā tathākarot/
punarapyadbhutaṃ śabdaṃ kṛtvā vālīnamāhvayat//

And oh the fortunate one (i.e. Laxman), then send him (Sugriv) to fight Vaali'. Then, Laxman tied the garland to his neck and respectfully coaxed him to go (17). Sugriv went back and called Vaali once again with a very strange voice (18).

[Note :—'Strange voice' because Sugriv was now infused with great confidence and renewed vigour with the victory garland around his neck.

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The voice was 'strange' also because now it was not the physical voice of Sugriv, the brother of Vaali, but the voice of Kaal or death of Vaali. It was most fearful and thunderous, spine-chilling and blood-cuddling.

Another interesting point is that Laxman had 'tied' and not 'put' the garland around Sugriv's neck. The plausible reason for this is that 'putting' a garland around the neck of a person is a symbol of respect, but Laxman showed that he has none for Sugriv, because on the one hand were his brothers Ram and Bharat who had sacrificed for each other, and on the other hand is this monkey who is after the blood of his brother, and that even by taking the help of someone else. Laxman was a magnificent warrior born in the Kshatriya clan that gave premium for valour, courage and strength of arms in the face of the enemy, and not to running away from the battle field under the onslaught of the enemy. Another reason is that he wished to ensure that the garland does not fall off in the thick of battle, for that would have been disastrous.]

तच्छ्रुत्वा विस्मितो वाली क्रोधेन महतावृतः। बद्ध्वा परिकरं सम्यग्गमनायोपचक्रमे ।। 19 ।।
गच्छन्तं वालिनं तारा गृहीत्वा निषिषेध तम्। न गन्तव्यं त्वयेदानीं शङ्का मेऽतीव जायते ।। 20 ।।
इदानीमेव ते भग्नः पुनरायाति सत्वरः। सहायो बलवांस्तस्य कश्चिन्नूनं समागतः ।। 21 ।।

tacchrutvā vismito vālī krodhena mahatāvṛtaḥ /
baddhvā parikaraṃ samyaggamanāyopacakrame //
gacchantaṃ vālinaṃ tārā gṛhītvā niṣiṣedha tam /
na gantavyaṃ tvayedānīṃ śaṅkā me'tīva jāyate //
idānīmeva te bhagnaḥ punarāyāti satvaraḥ /
sahāyo balavāṃstasya kaścinnūnaṃ samāgataḥ //

Hearing the challenging words of Sugriv, Vaali was very peeved, annoyed, extremely exasperated and angry (at Sugriv's temerity, audacity and dare devilry). He tied his waist-cloth and got ready to go (19).

At the time of his departure, his wife Tara was highly worried and distraught. She caught hold of his hand and tried to dissuade and stop him from going, saying—'Do not go now; my heart is very suspicious and worried (20). This fellow (Sugriv) had, a short while ago, been beaten back by you, but still he has come back too soon. This shows that, surely, he has found a strong and potent helper (who is inspiring so much confidence and dare-devilry in him)' (21).

वाली तामाह हे सुभ्रु शंका ते व्येतु तद्गता। प्रिये करं परित्यज्य गच्छ गच्छामि तं रिपुम् ।। 22 ।।
हत्वा शीघ्रं समायास्ये सहायस्तस्य को भवेत्। सहायो यदि सुग्रीवस्ततो हत्वोभयं क्षणात् ।। 23 ।।

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आयास्ये मा शुचः शूरः कथं तिष्ठेद् गृहे रिपुम्। ज्ञात्वाप्याह्वयमानं हि हत्वायास्यामि सुन्दरि।।24।।

vālī tāmāha he subhru śaṅkā te vyetu tadgatā/
priye karaṃ parityajya gaccha gacchāmi taṃ ripum//
hatvā śīghraṃ samāyāsye sahāyastasya ko bhavet/
sahāyo yadi sugrīvastato hatvobhayaṃ kṣaṇāt//
āyāsye mā śucaḥ śūraḥ kathaṃ tiṣṭhed gṛhe ripum/
jñātvāpyāhvayamānaṃ hi hatvāyāsyāmi sundari//

Vaali replied to her, 'Oh the one with a beautiful eyebrow! Do not have any doubt or suspicion in this regard. Oh dear! Leave my hand and return home. I shall also come back soon after having killed that enemy (Sugriv). Which helper will that unfortunate fellow (Sugriv) find? And even if he does find one, then I shall soon kill both of them and come back (22-23). You should not worry at all. (I cannot wait any longer, for—) How can any brave and courageous person stay in his house after being challenged by his enemy? Hence, I shall return only after killing him, oh the beautiful one (his wife Tara)!' (24).

तारोवाच

मत्तोऽन्यच्छृणु राजेन्द्र श्रुत्वा कुरु यथोचितम्। आह मामङ्गदः पुत्रो मृगयायां श्रुतं वचः।।25।।
अयोध्याधिपतिः श्रीमान् रामो दाशरथिः किल। लक्ष्मणेन सह भ्रात्रा सीतया भार्यया सह।।26।।
आगतो दण्डकारण्यं तत्र सीता हृता किल। रावणेन सह भ्रात्रा मार्गमाणोऽथ जानकीम्।।27।।
आगतो ऋष्यमूकादिं सुग्रीवेण समागतः। चकार तेन सुग्रीवः सख्यं चानलसाक्षिकम्।।28।।

tārovāca

matto'nyacchṛṇu rājendra śrutvā kuru yathocitam/
āha māmaṅgadaḥ putro mṛgayāyāṃ śrutaṃ vacaḥ//
ayodhyādhipatiḥ śrīmān rāmo dāśarathiḥ kila/
lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātā sītayā bhāryayā saha//
āgato daṇḍakāraṇyaṃ tatra sītā hṛtā kila/
rāvaṇena saha bhrātā mārgamāṇo'tha jānakīm//
āgato ṛṣyamūkādriṃ sugrīveṇa samāgataḥ/
cakāra tena sugrīvaḥ sakhyaṃ cānalasākṣikam//

Tara tried to reason with him and avoid his death. She said, 'Oh King of kings! Hear from me some news (that perhaps you weren't aware of hitherto). After hearing it, do whatever you deem fit. It has been told to me by your son Angad, who had himself heard of it while he was out hunting (in the forest) (25). Honourable Sri Ram, the son

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of Ayodhya's king Dashrath, along with his brother Laxman and wife Sita (26), had come to Dandakaranya forest. There, his wife Sita was abducted by Ravana. Presently, he has come this way along with his brother in search of Sita (27) and has reached Rishyamook. There he met and made friends with Sugriv with the sacred fire as a witness (28).

प्रतिज्ञां कृतवान् रामः सुग्रीवाय सलक्ष्मणः। वालिनं समरे हत्वा राजानं त्वां करोम्यहम्।। 29।।
इति निश्चित्य तौ यातौ निश्चितं शृणु मद्वचः। इदानीमेव ते भग्नः कथं पुनरुपागतः।।30।।

pratijñāṃ kṛtavān rāmaḥ sugrīvāya salakṣmaṇaḥ /
vālinaṃ samare hatvā rājānaṃ tvāṃ karomyaham //
iti niścitya tau yātau niścitaṃ śṛṇu madvacaḥ /
idānīmeva te bhagnaḥ kathaṃ punarupāgataḥ //

Sri Ram along with Laxman has vowed to Sugriv that they would slay Vaali and make him the king (of Kishkindha) (29). With this decision (resolve), both of them have also come with Sugriv. Believe me, otherwise how could he return so quickly after being beaten back by you (30).

अतस्त्वं सर्वथा वैरं त्यक्त्वा सुग्रीवमानय। यौवराज्येऽभिषिञ्चाशु रामं त्वं शरणं व्रज।। 31।।
पाहि मामङ्गदं राज्यं कुलं च हरिपुङ्गव। इत्युक्त्वाश्रुमुखी तारा पादयोः प्रणिपत्य तम्।।32।।
हस्ताभ्यां चरणौ धृत्या रुरोद भयविह्वला। तामालिङ्ग्य तदा वाली सस्नेहमिदमब्रवीत्।।33।।

atastvaṃ sarvathā vairaṃ tyaktvā sugrīvamānaya /
yauvarājye'bhiṣiñcāśu rāmaṃ tvaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja //
pāhi māmaṅgadaṃ rājyaṃ kulaṃ ca haripuṅgava /
ityuktvāśrumukhī tārā pādayoḥ praṇipatya tam //
hastābhyāṃ caraṇau dhṛtyā ruroda bhayavihvalā /
tāmāliṅgya tadā vālī sasnehamidamabravīt //

Therefore, you must totally forsake confrontationist attitude, ill-will and animosity with Sugriv, bring him here and immediately make him heir apparent, and then seek Sri Ram's refuge (in his holy feet) (31). By doing so, oh the best among the monkey clan, save me, Angad (your son), this kingdom and this clan from destruction'.

Saying this, Tara fell down at the feet of Vaali. At that moment, streams of tears rolled down her face (32). She was extremely agitated with fear, and catching hold of both his feet, she wept bitterly. Then Vaali affectionately embraced her reassuringly and said (33)—

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वाली उवाच

स्त्रीस्वभावाद्बिभेषि त्वं प्रिये नास्ति भयं मम। रामो यदि समायातो लक्ष्मणेन समं प्रभुः ।।34।।
तदा रामेण मे स्नेहो भविष्यति न संशयः। रामो नारायणः साक्षादवतीर्णोऽखिलप्रभुः ।।35।।
भूभारहरणार्थाय श्रुतं पूर्वं मयानघे। स्वपक्षः परपक्षो वा नास्ति तस्य परात्मनः ।।36।।

vālī uvāca

strīsvabhāvādbibheṣi tvaṃ priye nāsti bhayaṃ mama /
rāmo yadi samāyāto lakṣmaṇena samaṃ prabhuḥ //
tadā rāmeṇa me sneho bhaviṣyati na saṃśayaḥ /
rāmo nārāyaṇaḥ sākṣādavatīrṇo'khilaprabhuḥ //
bhūbhāraharaṇārthāya śrutaṃ pūrvaṃ mayānaghe /
svapakṣaḥ parapakṣo vā nāsti tasya parātmanaḥ //

Vaali said, 'Oh dear! You are unnecessarily afraid because of your feminine nature. I do not see any reason to be scared or fear for myself. If Sri Ram, the Lord, has come here with Laxman (34), then there is no doubt that we will have affectionate relationship with each other. Sri Ram is Sri Narayan himself who is the Lord of all (including the Gods and everything in the world/universe) (35). He has incarnated himself to remove the burden of this world. I have already (previously) heard about it. He is sinless, faultless and pure (Anagh). He is beyond Nature, and is the macrocosmic supreme Soul of the creation as well as the microcosmic soul (Atma) of all the individual creatures. He takes sides with none (i.e. he does not favour or disfavour anyone, because he has equanimity and dispassion towards all; he treats all alike) (36).

आनेष्यामि गृहं साध्वि नत्वा तच्चरणाम्बुजम्। भजतोऽनुभजत्येष भक्तिगम्यः सुरेश्वरः ।।37।।
यदि स्वयं समायाति सुग्रीवो हन्मि तं क्षणात्। यदुक्तं यौवराज्याय सग्रीवस्याभिषेचनम् ।।38।।
कथमाहूयमानोऽहं युद्धाय रिपुणा प्रिये। शूरोऽहं सर्वलोकानां सम्मतः शुभलक्षणे ।।39।।
भीतभीतमिदं वाक्यं कथं वाली वदेत्प्रिये। तस्माच्छोकं परित्यज्य तिष्ठ सुन्दरि वेश्मनि ।।40।।

āneṣyāmi gṛhaṃ sādhvi natvā taccaraṇāmbujam /
bhajato'nubhajatyeṣa bhaktigamyaḥ sureśvaraḥ //
yadi svayaṃ samāyāti sugrīvo hanmi taṃ kṣaṇāt /
yaduktaṃ yauvarājyāya sugīvasyābhiṣecanam //
kathamāhūyamāno'haṃ yuddhāya ripuṇā priye /
śūro'haṃ sarvalokānāṃ sammataḥ śubhalakṣaṇe //
bhītabhītamidaṃ vākyaṃ kathaṃ vālī vadetpriye /
tasmācchokaṃ parityajya tiṣṭha sundari veśmani //

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Oh the simple-hearted, chaste and virtuous lady! I shall bow at his lotus-like feet and bring him home. That Lord of all the Gods is attained (accessed) only by devotion and dedication, and becomes favourable, benign and benevolent towards anyone who worships and adores him sincerely (37). And if Sugriv has come alone, I shall kill him in an instant. Besides this, the suggestion that you have made that he (Sugriv) be anointed as an heir apparent (38), so oh the auspicious and virtuous dear, I have been challenged for a duel by him. Being renowned in the world as most courageous and brave, how can you expect me to say such cowardly, fearful and humble words of submission and surrender to him like I was his serf, his vassal or his supplicant?[1] Hence, oh the beautiful one, you must be rest assured and sit at home (peacefully without worrying any further)' (39-40).

[Note :—[1] Vaali was correct in this observation, for had Sugriv approached him for compromise and rapprochement, Vaali would surely have considered his request. But it is highly imprudent to show such courteous behaviour for a person who has become a bitter rival, thirsting for one's blood. Such a gesture would send a wrong signal, and the consequences in the long rum would not be pleasant to say the least. Vaali had little choice now.

Further, as it happened, Vaali did not get a chance to invite Sri Ram or surrender before him because the latter was hiding behind a tree. In all fairness to Vaali, his death at the hands of Sri Ram was one disgraceful spot on the latter that he could not remove for the rest of his life. The answer that Vaali gave his wife makes him more praise worthy than his younger brother. Sugriv had to send Hanuman to find who Sri Ram was, but Vaali and Tara were aware of his identity. Sugriv turns out to be a very selfish creature as compared to Vaali, which augments the suggestions made in note to verse no.17-18 above.]

एवमाश्वास्य तारां तां शोचन्तीमश्रुलोचनाम्। गतो वाली समुद्युक्तः सग्रीवस्य वधाय सः ।। 41 ।।
दृष्ट्वा वालिनमायान्तं सुग्रीवो भीमविक्रमः। उत्पपात गले बद्धपुष्पमालोः मतङ्गवत् ।। 42 ।।
मुष्टिभ्यां ताडयामास वालिनं सोऽपि तं तथा। अहन्वाली च सुग्रीवं सुग्रीवो वालिनं तथा ।। 43 ।।

evamāśvāsya tārāṃ tāṃ śocantīmaśrulocanām /
gato vālī samudyuktaḥ sugrīvasya vadhāya saḥ //
dṛṣṭvā vālīnamāyāntaṃ sugrīvo bhīmavikramaḥ /
utpapāta gale baddhapuṣpamālo mataṅgavat //
muṣṭibhyāṃ tāḍayāmāsa vālinaṃ so'pi taṃ tathā /
ahanvālī ca sugrīvaṃ sugrīvo vālinaṃ tathā //

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In this manner, having comforted (consoled) Tara who was weeping distressfully with sorrows, worries and grief, Vaali went with a firm determination to kill Sugriv (41). Seeing Vaali approach, Sugriv—who was vigorously enthused with rekindled valour and strength, reassured and made fearless by the garland symbolising victory tied around his neck—began excitedly to jump, skip and leap like a wild, intoxicated and arrogant elephant (42). Then Sugriv and Vaali started exchanging fierce fist-blows. This vicious scuffle and exchange of blows continued between them for some time (43).

रामं विलोकयन्नेव सुग्रीवो युयुधे युधि। इत्येवं युद्ध्यमानौ तौ दृष्ट्वा रामः प्रतापवान्।। 44।।
बाणमादाय तूणीरादैन्द्रे धनुषि सन्दधे। आकृष्य कर्णपर्यन्तमदृश्यो वृक्षखण्डगः।। 45।।
निरीक्ष्य वालिनं सम्यग्लक्ष्यं तद्धृदयं हरिः। उत्ससर्जाशनिसमं महावेगं महाबलः।। 46।।

rāmaṃ vilokayanneva sugrīvo yuyudhe yudhi /
ityevaṃ yuddhyamānau tau dṛṣṭvā rāmaḥ pratāpavān //
bāṇamādāya tūṇīrādaindre dhanuṣi sandadhe /
ākṛṣya karṇaparyantamadṛśyo vṛkṣakhaṇḍagaḥ //
nirīkṣya vālinaṃ samyaglakṣyaṃ taddhṛdayaṃ hariḥ /
utsasarjāśanisamaṃ mahāvegaṃ mahābalaḥ //

While fighting, Sugriv's gaze was fixed on Sri Ram. The most glorious, famous and majestic Sri Ram saw them fighting each other. To keep his words, he took out a single arrow which was as invincible, sturdy, strong and hard as well as swift and agile as the Vajra (thunderbolt; weapon of Indra), mounted it on the bow of Indra (which he had been carrying), hid himself from view behind a tree trunk, and Sri Hari (Sri Ram) then shot it straight at the heart of Vaali (44-46). [See verse nos. 51-54.]

[Note :—This quiver, arrow and bow were given to Sri Ram by sage Agastya in Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 45-46.]

बिभेद स शरो वक्षो वालिनः कम्पयन्महीम्। उत्पपात महाशब्दं मुञ्चन्स निपपात ह।। 47।।
तदा मुहूर्त्तं निःसंज्ञो भूत्वा चेतनमाप सः। ततो वाली ददर्शाग्रे रामं राजीवलोचनम्।
धनुरालम्ब्य वामेन हस्तेनान्येन सायकम्।। 48।।
बिभ्राणं चीरवसनं जटामुकुटधारिणम्। विशालवक्षसं भ्राजद्वनमालाविभूषितम्।। 49।।

bibheda sa śaro vakṣo vālinaḥ kampayanmahīm /
utpapāta mahāśabdaṃ muñcansa nipapāta ha //

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tadā muhūrttaṃ nihsaṃjño bhūtvā cetanamāpa saḥ /
tato vālī dadarśāgre rāmaṃ rājīvalocanam /
dhanurālambya vāmena hastenānyena sāyakam //
bibhrāṇaṃ cīravasanaṃ jaṭāmukuṭadhāriṇam /
viśālavakṣasaṃ bhrājadvanamālāvibhūṣitam //

That arrow pierced Vaali's chest. He made a terrible roar, leapt high in the air and fell down on the ground. The earth shook as he fell (47). For one Muhurt (literally 1 hour and 48 minutes; here meaning a short while), he lost all consciousness, but later he regained his senses, and then he saw the lotus-eyed Sri Ram standing in front of him. He (Sri Ram) had leaned against the bow in his left hand (i.e. Sri Ram was standing with the bow touching the ground and he used it like a stick to lean against), had an arrow in his right hand (48), and had clothes made of bark of trees and a crown of matted hairs on his head. His broad chest was adorned by an attractive 'Van-Mala' (a garland made of wild flowers found in the forest) (49).

पीनचार्वायतभुजं नवदूर्वादलच्छविम्। सुग्रीवलक्ष्मणाभ्यां च पार्श्वयोः परिसेवितम्।। 50 ।।
विलोक्य शनकैः प्राह वाली रामं विगर्हयन्। किं मयापकृतं राम तव येन हतोऽस्म्यहम्।। 51 ।।

pīnacārvāyatabhūjaṃ navadūrvādalacchavim /
sugrīvalakṣmaṇābhyāṃ ca pārśvayoḥ parisevitam //
vilokya śanakaiḥ prāha vālī rāmaṃ vigarhayan /
kiṃ mayāpakṛtaṃ rāma tava yena hato'smyaham //

His (Sri Ram's) arms were robust, well built, strong, attractive and long, the radiance of the body was dark like a new 'Durba' grass (a special type of dark green grass used during religious ceremonies), while Laxman and Sugriv were standing on either of his side to serve him (50). Seeing Sri Ram, Vaali said softly, admonishing him with a slight hint of reprimand and a reproach in his sarcastic words, 'Oh Sri Ram! What harm did I do to you that you have killed me? (51).

राजधर्ममविज्ञाय गर्हितं कर्म ते कृतम्। वृक्षखण्डे तिरोभूत्वा त्यजता मयि सायकम्।। 52 ।।
यशः किं लप्स्यसे राम चोरवत्कृतसङ्गरः। यदि क्षत्रियदायादो मनोर्वंशसमुद्भवः।। 53 ।।
युद्धं कृत्वा समक्षं मे प्राप्स्यसे तत्फलं तदा। सुग्रीवेण कृतं किं ते मया वा न कृतं किमु।। 54 ।।

rājadharmamavijñāya garhitaṃ karma te kṛtam /
vṛkṣakhaṇḍe tirobhūtvā tyajatā mayi sāyakam //

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yaśaḥ kiṃ lapsyase rāma coravatkṛtasaṅgaraḥ /
yadi kṣatriyadāyādo manorvaṃśasamudbhavaḥ //
yuddhaṃ kṛtvā samakṣaṃ me prāpyase tatphalaṃ tadā /
sugrīveṇa kṛtaṃ kiṃ te mayā vā na kṛtaṃ kimu //

Not knowing what politics consists of (or what are the rules governing kinghood, statecraft, governance, statesmanship, diplomacy etc.), you have done such an infamous, ignominious and reprehensible act. What fame and glory will you get by killing me stealthily like a thief or a thug by shooting an arrow at me from behind a tree? If you are a Kshatriya prince and are born in the dignified race of Manu, then you should have fought me in the front (i.e. you should have faced me instead of hiding behind a tree and shooting me unawares). Then you would have got some reward (either good name and fame or ignominious defeat) for it. What favours did Sugriv do for you and what I didn't? (52-54).

रावणेन हृता भार्या तव राम महावने। सुग्रीवं शरणं यातस्तदर्थमिति शुश्रुम।। 55।।
बत राम न जानीषे मद्बलं लोकविश्रुतम्। रावणं सकुलं बद्ध्वा ससीतं लङ्कया सह।।56।।
आनयामि मुहूर्त्तार्द्धाद्यदि चेच्छामि राघव। धर्मिष्ठ इति लोकेऽस्मिन् कथ्यसे रघुनन्दन।।57।।

rāvaṇena hatā bhāryā tava rāma mahāvane /
sugrīvaṃ śaraṇaṃ yātastadarthamiti śuśruma //
bata rāma na jānīṣe madbalaṃ lokaviśrutam /
rāvaṇa sakulaṃ baddhvā sasītaṃ laṅkayā saha //
ānayāmi muhūrttārddhādyadi cecchāmi rāghava /
dharmiṣṭha iti loke'smin kathyase raghunandana //

I have heard that your wife (Sita) has been stolen (abducted) by Ravana, and you have taken shelter and refuge[1] (i.e. sought the help) of Sugriv to get her back. (55). But it is regrettable that you have not heard of my world famous strength and valour. Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! If I want, I can bring Sita and the rest of Lanka along with Ravana and his entire clan tied in shackles, by wrenching control over them, in half a Muhurt (i.e. a period of 1 hour and 48 minutes; here meaning, in a very short time). And oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! The irony is that you are known and reputed in this world as being very righteous, noble and upright in your demeanours, conduct and outlook (but look the way you have killed me) (56-57).

[Note—[1]Vaali has used the degrading and humiliating word 'Sharnam'

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in the text, which literally means taking shelter or refuge. No self respecting Kshatriya would prefer to take refuge and shelter with someone much junior to him. In the present case, Sugriv is born a monkey who lives in exile, and scared stiff himself. He lives on a mountain, and had to take the help of a stranger to settle scores with his own brother. Vaali means to tell Sri Ram that he has not done a wise thing behooving his noble birth and high pedigree to have sought the 'shelter and refuge' of a humbler person than him self.

Vaali further says that it would have been much more prudent for Sri Ram to have sought his (Vaali's) help because of two reasons—first, he would have approached a king and not a humble exiled person, and second, Vaali was competent to bring back Sita from the clutches of Ravana because he was far more superior in strength than Ravana himself, and the two were friends and bound by a treaty whereby Ravana couldn't possibly have refused Vaali's request for returning Sita. Besides this, there is a legend that Vaali had stuffed Ravana under his armpit when the latter had gone to fight with him, treating him with more as a nuisance than a challenge. Ravana was released later on as a token of mercy by Vaali, and a treaty of friendship was made between them that they would help each other when the need arose. Since that time, Ravana was in awe of Vaali, and if the latter had asked him to release Sita, Ravana wouldn't have mustered enough courage to refuse.

This also explains what Vaali means to say when he rebukes Sri Ram by saying that he does not know what is proper in politics and diplomacy in verse no.52. But Vaali is wrong on one count, as killing a king to install a puppet on the throne is standard strategy adopted by kings at all times in history. That is exactly what Lord Ram had done—he had installed Sugriv on the throne to ensure that he would always remain obliged of him and do his bidding.]

वानरं व्याधवद्धत्वा धर्मं कं लप्स्यसे वद। अभक्ष्यं वानरं मांसं हत्वा मां किं करिष्यसि।। 58।।
इत्येवं बहु भाषन्तं वालिनं राघवोऽब्रवीत्। धर्मस्य गोप्ता लोकेऽस्मिंश्चरामि सशरासनः।।59।।
अधर्मकारिणं हत्वा सद्धर्मं पालयाम्यहम्। दुहिता भगिनी भ्रातुर्भार्या चैव तथा स्नुषा।।60।।
समा यो रमते तासामेकामपि विमूढधीः। पातकी स तु विज्ञेयः स वध्यो राजभिः सदा।।61।।

vānaraṃ vyādhavaddhatvā dharmaṃ kaṃ lapsyase vada /
abhakṣyaṃ vānaraṃ māṃsaṃ hatvā māṃ kiṃ kariṣyasi //
ityevaṃ bahu bhāṣantaṃ vālinaṃ rāghavo'bravīt /
dharmasya goptā loke'smiṃścarāmi saśarāsanaḥ //
adharmakāriṇaṃ hatvā saddharmaṃ pālayāmyaham /
duhitā bhaginī bhrāturbhāryā caiva tathā snuṣā //
samā yo ramate tāsāmekāmapi vimūḍhadhīḥ /
pātakī sa tu vijñeyaḥ sa vadho rājabhiḥ sadā //

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Say, what good reward in the shape of fame or glory would you get by killing a humble monkey like a hunter? The flesh of a monkey is not worthy to be eaten; so, what will you do by killing me?' (58).

When Vaali had said these bitter admonishing words full of spite, reproach and sarcasm, Raghav (Sri Ram) replied politely, 'It is to protect Dharma that I roam in this world holding a bow (59), and kill those who are wayward and unrighteous, to protect the noble path of probity, propriety and righteousness. A daughter, sister, wife of the younger brother and a daughter-in-law are all to be treated equally. Any wicked rascal who has conjugal relationship with or casts an evil eye on anyone of them should be regarded as highly sinful, unrighteous and pervert. It is expected (deemed proper and necessary) that a king should kill such a person without any second thoughts—this is for sure (60-61).

[Note to verse no.58 :—Vaali has very fearlessly but politely scolded Sri Ram for what was indeed, in the author's personal view, a most selfish, abhorable and ignominious act on the part of Sri Ram, who was supposed to be equal to all and the most enlightened soul alive, to have killed someone from hiding, and especially when the person whose side the Lord takes proves himself to be no better than the one against whom the Lord had sided with him, which no amount of justification and white-washing can gloss over; it is not expected that such a highly wise person as Sri Ram would take the sides with any one person in what was supposed to be a family affair, a squabble between brothers. As we move on with the story we would learn that Sugriv was a very lustful and indulgent monkey and had kept Vaali's wife Tara as his mistress. As it happens, Sri Ram looked the other way at this and did not punish Sugriv for his acts using the same logic and criterion that he used to justify Vaali's killing as described in verse no. 60-61.

In my personal view, there is a subtle moral in this episode—and that is since Sri Ram had worn the mantle of an ordinary human being, he had to act like one, complete with its shortcomings. Selfishness, vested interests, trying to interpret things within the confines of one's own point of view, trying to justify one's deeds by citing laws which one would have no compunctions in violating when it suits one's scheme of things etc. are part of the game of being a human being with all its accompanying faults and shortcomings. Sri Ram was the all-knowing supreme Lord, so there were other considerations playing upon his mind that he decided to kill Vaali from hiding, though such reasons are not mentioned here. One is the boon that Vaali had that he would automatically get half of the strength of his adversary who faces him in battle; so had Ram faced him from the front, he would not have been able to subdue the latter at any

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cost. Second, to usurp forcefully the rights of someone else is indeed an unrighteous deed, and Vaali did that by throwing Sugriv out of the kingdom. It is the wont of the Lord to help those who have been wronged, and especially those who are humble and distressed, and Sugriv was indeed such a candidate. So, on the one hand Sri Ram's action seems not above reproach, there was no other better way and options left open to him under the given circumstances.

Imagine the situation when Sri Ram would have kept quiet when Sugriv had told him about the injustice done to him by his elder brother as described in verse no.46-58 in canto 1 earlier, and Sri Ram's response in the next verse no.59. The Lord would not have expected any cooperation of any worth from Sugriv had he not volunteered to help him against the injustice done to him.

But I do not agree with Vaali when he says that Sri Ram did not know the laws of political science as in verse no. 52 above. In fact, Sri Ram was very wise enough to eliminate Vaali before proceeding to attack Lanka. There is a legend that Vaali and Ravana had a military pact, made at the time of their friendship as described above in this note, according to which the former was to come to the aid of the latter in case he was attacked from the north and vice-versa if the attack came from the south. This fact has been mentioned by Valmiki in his Ramayan, Uttar Kand, Canto no. 34. It was a prudent military strategy on part of Sri Ram not to take the risk of letting his rear unsafe by keeping Vaali alive. Further, he must have reasoned that blood is always thicker than water, so to say, and there was a good chance that the two brothers might join hands and suddenly trap them (Sri Ram and Laxman) in an alien land unawares. We must remember that Sri Ram was treading on an alien soil, nearer to hostile country as he closed in on Lanka. The two brothers were alone. He could not afford to take any strategic military risk. With Vaali out of the way, Sugriv must have felt not only obliged to Sri Ram for ascending the throne but also terrified of him. He was reduced to be a mere Vassal king; He had no choice but to follow Sri Ram's instructions for fear of his own life.

As a clever master stroke of this game plan, Angad was shown much favour by Sri Ram—as a counter balance to Sugriv as well as to assuage Angad's hurt sentiments which must have been ruffled on his father's (Vaali's) death. It was also done to uphold Vaali's last wish expressed by him at the time of his death in verse no. 69 below. Sri Ram had also weaned away Hanuman's affections and loyalties from Sugriv towards himself. And Hanuman was well known to be the most strong, valiant and valorous in the monkey army. With him and Angad by his side, and out of the grip of Sugriv, Sri Ram literally had all the aces up his sleeves, as it were.

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But Vaali was not wholly wrong, for a wise king as Sri Ram was always does things in such a way that he does not get a bad name for himself in history by allowing himself into controversial actions directly, as the Lord had done by killing Vaali from hiding, and especially also for no personal grouse with him. But again Sri Ram had no choice, for he was alone in the forest and could not depute someone else to do the dirty tricks for him.]

त्वं तु भ्रातुः कनिष्ठस्य भार्यायां रमसे बलात्। अतो मया धर्मविदा हतोऽसि वनगोचर।। 62।।
त्वं कपित्वान्न जानीषे महान्तो विचरन्ति यत्। लोकं पुनानाः सञ्चारैरतस्तान्नातिभाषयेत्।।63।।

tvaṃ tu bhrātuḥ kaniṣṭhasya bhāryāyāṃ ramase balāt /
ato mayā dharmavidā hato'si vanagocara //
tvaṃ kapitvānna jānīṣe mahānto vicaranti yat /
lokaṃ punānāḥ sañcārairatastānnātibhāṣayet //

Oh you forest dwelling creature! You had forcefully kept (as a mistress, and had conjugal relationship) with your younger brother's wife. Hence, I, who am the upholder of righteousness, propriety, morality, noble conduct and probity, have killed you (62). After all you are a monkey. You are not aware that great personages roam about in this world purging (purifying) it with their noble characters and deeds. One should not talk with them with such temerity and pretensions of uprightness' (63).

[Note :—Well, if this is the reason for Vaali's slaying, Sri Ram will have no excuse for letting off Sugriv for, once crowned as a king, he too kept Tara, the wife of Vaali, as his mistress. See Canto 4, verse no. 46.]

तच्छ्रुत्वा भयसन्त्रस्तो ज्ञात्वा रामं रमापतिम्। वाली प्रणम्य रभसादृामं वचनमब्रवीत्।। 64।।
राम राम महाभाग जाने त्वां परमेश्वरम्। अजानता मया किञ्चिदुक्तं तत्क्षन्तुमर्हसि।। 65।।

tacchrutvā bhayasantrasto jñātvā rāmaṃ ramāpatim /
vālī praṇamya rabhasādrāmaṃ vacanamabravīt //
rāma rāma mahābhāga jāne tvāṃ parameśvaram /
ajānatā mayā kiñciduktaṃ tatkṣantumarhasi //

Hearing these words of Sri Ram, Vaali realised that he was the husband of Laxmi (Vishnu) himself, and then he regretted and became afraid that he had said so many uncalled-for words against the supreme Lord that Sri Ram was. He hastily bowed before him and said (64), 'Oh Sri Ram! Oh the great and fortunate one! I have come to know (realise) that you are the supreme Lord himself. Whatever I

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have said out of my ignorance, you should excuse and forgive me for it (65).

साक्षत्त्वच्छरघातेन विशेषेण तवाग्रतः। त्यजाम्यसून्महायोगिदुर्लभं तव दर्शनम्।। 66।।
यन्नाम विवशो गृह्णन् म्रियमाणः परं पदम्। याति साक्षात्स एवाद्य मुमूर्षोर्मे पुरः स्थितः।।67।।

sākṣāttvaccharaghātena viśeṣeṇa tavāgrataḥ /
tyajāmyasūnmahāyogidurlabhaṃ tava darśanam //
yannāma vivaśo gṛhṇan mriyamāṇaḥ paraṃ padam /
yāti sākṣātsa evādya mumūrṣorme puraḥ sthitaḥ //

Your Darshan (divine view) is difficult and rare even for great Yogis (ascetics). It is a matter of great privilege and good luck for me that I have been pierced by your arrow and am dying before you (66). He, by taking whose name even under compulsion, a person attains the supreme stature of being one with the supreme Lord at the time of his death, that same Lord is standing in front of me himself during my last moments (what more can I expect?) (67).

देव जानामि पुरुषं त्वां श्रियं जानकीं शुभाम्। रावणस्य वधार्थाय जातं त्वां ब्रह्मणार्थितम्।। 68।।
अनुजानीहि मां राम यान्तं तत्पदमुत्तमम्। मम तुल्यबले बाले अङ्गदे त्वं दयां कुरु।।69।।

deva jānāmi puruṣaṃ tvāṃ śriyaṃ jānakīṃ śubham /
rāvaṇasya vadhārthāya jātaṃ tvāṃ brahmaṇārthitam //
anujānīhi māṃ rāma yāntaṃ tatpadamuttamam /
mama tulyabale bāle aṅgade tvaṃ dayāṃ kuru //

Oh Lord! I know it that you are the supreme Purush (i.e. the macrocosmic Viraat Purush; Lord Vishnu), and the auspicious Sita is Laxmi personified. You have manifested (revealed) yourself as an incarnation on the prayers of Brahma to kill Ravana (68). Oh Sri Ram! Now I am going to the most superior and exalted abode; please give me permission. My son Angad is strong and brave like me. Have mercy, grace and benevolence upon him, as well as be magnanimous, benignant and beneficent towards him (69).

[Note :—By handing over Angad in charge of Sri Ram as his last wish, Vaali had tactfully ensured his son's secure future. Now, Angad was not left at the whims and mercies of Sugriv. It was Sri Ram's responsibility to ensure that Angad lived respectfully, comfortably in a dignified manner and acquired an honourable status in the new setup under Sugriv. Being orphaned, Angad found a foster father in Sri Ram. This is the reason that Sri Ram had showered so much affection on him and had anointed Sugriv

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as king and Angad as the heir apparent—after Sugriv, Angad was to become the king of Kishkindha and *not* Sugriv's sons if he had any. In one master stroke the Lord had made the arrangement that the kingdom would be reverted back to the blood line of Vaali for all times to come.]

विशल्यं कुरु मे राम हृदयं पाणिना स्पृशन्। तथेति बाणमुद्धृत्य रामः पस्पर्श पाणिना।
त्यक्त्वा तद्वानरं देहममरेन्द्रोऽभवत्क्षणात्।। 70।।

viśalyaṃ kuru me rāma hṛdayaṃ pāṇinā spṛśan /
tatheti bāṇamuddhṛtya rāmaḥ pasparśa pāṇinā /
tyaktvā tadvānaraṃ dehamamarendro'bhavatkṣaṇāt //

Oh Sri Ram! Touch my heart with your lotus-like hands and remove the arrow still embedded in it'. Then saying 'alright', Sri Ram touched him and yanked the arrow out of his chest. Immediately, Vaali left his body of a monkey and assumed the divine form which was like that of Indra (the king of Gods) (70).

वाली रघूत्तमशराभिहतो विमृष्टो रामेण शीतलकरेण सुखाकरेण।
सद्यो विमुच्य कपिदेहमनन्यलभ्यं प्राप्तं पदं परमहंसगणैर्दुरापम्।। 71।।

vālī raghūttamaśarābhihato vimṛṣṭo
rāmeṇa śītalakareṇa sukhākareṇa /
sadyo vimucya kapidehamananyalabhyaṃ
prāptaṃ padaṃ paramahaṃsagaṇairdurāpam //

Lord Shiva said to Parvati—'Oh Parvati! Vaali was killed by the arrow of the most exalted Raghu and he also got the soothing, comforting and cooling touch of his (Sri Ram's) lotus-like hands while he was alive. Hence, he instantly left his mortal coil (body) of a monkey and attained the exalted stature which is difficult for anyone to attain. What more, that supreme stature is most difficult even for the great souls called Paramhans to attain (71).

[Note—The word 'Paramhans' has two parts—viz. Param and Hans. The word Param means the most exalted, supreme, the greatest one, the best of any thing or state, while Hans means a Swan. This particular bird is used as a metaphor for someone who is deemed to be most wise, glorified, enlightened and knowledgeable in the essence of the fundamental teachings of the scriptures about spiritualism and metaphysics, and who picks the best amid the clutter of things available, even as a swan is reputed to partake pearls or milk and exclude water and other less valuable residual things. Swan is considered as the wisest amongst the birds. Therefore, a Paramhans is a person who is most wise, enlightened,

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realised, learned and sagacious. So Lord Shiva means here that even those who are as wise as the legendary swan are not as fortunate as Vaali because of the fact that he died with the Lord standing in his front and had the glorious fortune of being touched by the Lord himself, because the Lord's touch has a magical result in providing emancipation and salvation for the soul.]

***

Kishkindha Kand — Canto 3

Tara's lamentation; Sri Ram's consolation to her; Sugriv's coronation

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

निहते वालिनि रणे रामेण परमात्मना। दुद्रुवुर्वानराः सर्वे किष्किन्धां भयविह्वलाः।। 1।।
तारामूचुर्महाभागे हतो वाली रणाजिरे। अङ्गदं परिरक्षाद्य मन्त्रिणः परिनोदय।। 2।।
चतुर्द्वारकपाटादीन् बद्ध्वा रक्षामहे पुरीम्। वानराणां तु राजानमङ्गदं कुरु भामिनि।। 3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

nihate vālini raṇe rāmeṇa paramātmanā /
dudruvurvānarāḥ sarve kiṣkindhāṃ bhayavihvalāḥ //
tārāmūcurmahābhāge hato vālī raṇājire /
aṅgadaṃ parirakṣādya mantriṇaḥ parinodaya //
caturdvārakapāṭādīn baddhvā rakṣāmahe purīm /
vānarāṇāṃ tu rājānamaṅgadaṃ kuru bhāmini //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! When the Parmatma (the supreme Soul; the supreme Lord of creation; Sri Ram) had slayed Vaali, all the monkeys (who had gathered to watch the duel between the two brothers) were extremely agitated by fear and ran towards (i.e. converged at the centre of) Kishkindha Puri (1). They rushed to Tara and reported, 'Oh the greatest one! The king of monkeys, Vaali, has been killed in the battle field. Now take care of (protect) Angad and alert all the ministers (2). Oh the chaste, gentle and royal lady! We are closing all the gates of the city; you must make Angad the king of monkeys forthwith' (3).

निहतं वालिनं श्रुत्वा तारा शोकविमूर्च्छिता। अताडयत्स्वपाणिभ्यां शिरो वक्षश्च भूरिशः।। 4।।
किमङ्गदेन राज्येन नगरेण धनेन वा। इदानीमेव निधनं यास्यामि पतिना सह।।5।।

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nihataṃ vālinaṃ śrutvā tārā śokavimūrchitā /
atāḍayatsvapāṇibhyāṃ śiro vakṣaśca bhūriśaḥ //
kimaṅgadena rājyena nagareṇa dhanena vā /
idānīmeva nidhanaṃ yāsyāmi patinā saha //

Hearing that Vaali has been killed, Tara fainted due to grief and shock. She started beating her chest and head repeatedly (4). She lamented gravely, 'What have I got to do with Angad, the kingdom, the city and wealth? I will leave my life (die) along with my dear husband' (5).

इत्युक्त्वा त्वरिता तत्र रुदती मुक्तमूर्धजा। ययौ तारातिशोकार्ता यत्र भर्तृकलेवरम्।। 6।।
पतितं वालिनं दृष्ट्वा रक्तैः पांसुभिरावृतम्। रुदती नाथनाथेति पतिता तस्य पादयोः।। 7।।

ityuktvā tvaritā tatra rudatī muktamūrdhajā /
yayau tārātiśokārtā yatra bhartṛkalevaram //
patitaṃ vālinaṃ dṛṣṭvā raktaiḥ pāṃsubhirāvṛtam /
rudatī nāthanātheti patitā tasya pādayoḥ //

Saying this, she immediately went to the place where the dead body of her husband lay. She was overcome with grief, sorrows and remorse, and her hairs were disheveled and scattered all around her. There, seeing Vaali smeared in blood and dust, she wailed woefully 'Oh Lord!', and fell down at his feet (6-7).

करुणं विलपन्ती सा ददर्श रघुनन्दनम्। राम मां जहि बाणेन येन वाली हतस्त्वया।। 8।।
गच्छामि पतिसालोक्यं पतिर्मामभिकाङ्क्षते। स्वर्गेऽपि न सुखं तस्य मां विना रघुनन्दन।। 9।।

karuṇaṃ vilapantī sā dadarśa raghunandanam /
rāma māṃ jahi bāṇena yena vālī hatastvayā //
gacchāmi patisālokyaṃ patirmāmabhikāṅkṣate /
svarge'pi na sukhaṃ tasya māṃ vinā raghunandana //

While lamenting and wailing most pitifully, her sight (glance) fell on Sri Ram. She said, 'Oh Sri Ram! Kill me with the same arrow with which you have killed Vaali (8) so that I can go to the abode where my husband has gone. He must be waiting for me, oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram), because he cannot have peace and solace even in heaven without me (9).

पत्नीवियोगजं दुःखमनुभूतं त्वयानघ। वालिने मां प्रयच्छाशु पत्नीदानफलं भवेत्।। 10।।
सुग्रीव त्वं सुखं राज्यं दापितं वालिघातिना। रामेण रुमया सार्धं भुङ्क्ष्व सापत्नवर्जितम्।। 11।।

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patniviyogajaṃ duḥkhamanubhūtaṃ tvayānagha /
vāline māṃ prayacchāśu patnīdānaphalaṃ bhavet //
sugrīva tvaṃ sukhaṃ rājyaṃ dāpitaṃ vālighātinā /
rāmeṇa rumayā sārdhaṃ bhuṅkṣva sāpatnavarjitam //

Oh Anagh (one who is sinless, faultless and pure, here referring to Sri Ram)! You have experienced the agonies of separation from a wife (hence, you can imagine the intensity of it). Therefore, you should send me to Vaali. By doing this, you will get the reward of sparing a man's woman (or wife). [That is, you would be doing a rightful thing by letting me die with my husband because a chaste and loyal wife has no business to live and enjoy life without her husband. That would be a great act of charity on your part, for I know that now I would be left at the mercy of my treacherous brother-in-law Sugriv. And I do not want to compromise on my integrity.] (10).

Oh Sugriv! You have been given the kingdom by Sri Ram who is the slayer (killer) of Vaali (and you should therefore be wary of Ram!). You enjoy that kinghood with Ruma (Sugriv's wife) without any thorn (obstacle, contender) any more' (11).

[Note :—Tara's most sarcastic, highly caustic and very anguished remark are evident proof of her deep sorrows and distress at the dirty tricks that was played on her husband by Sri Ram and Sugriv. She has gone to the extent of labeling Sri Ram with the ignominious epithet—a slayer of Vaali—which stuck with him till eternity. She subtly tells Sugriv to be careful of the Lord, for if he goes against his will, he would face the same fate as his brother.]

इत्येवं विलपन्तीं तां तारां रामो महामनाः। सान्त्वयामास दयया तत्त्वज्ञानोपदेशतः ।। 12 ।।
किं भीरु शोचसि व्यर्थं शोकस्याविषयं पतिम्। पतिस्तवायं देहो वा जीवो वा वद तत्त्वतः ।। 13 ।।
पञ्चात्मको जडो देहस्त्वङ्मांसरुधिरास्थिमान्। कालकर्मगुणोत्पन्नः सोऽप्यास्तेऽद्यापि ते पुरः ।। 14 ।।

ityevaṃ vilapantīṃ tāṃ tārāṃ rāmo mahāmanāḥ /
sāntvayāmāsa dayayā tattvajñānopadeśataḥ //
kiṃ bhīru śocasi vyarthaṃ śokasyāviṣayaṃ patim /
patistavāyaṃ deho vā jīvo vā vada tattvataḥ //
pañcātmako jaḍo dehastvaṅmāṃsarudhirāsthimān /
kālakarmaguṇotpannaḥ so'pyāste'dyāpi te puraḥ //

Sri Ram condoled the lamenting and mourning Tara by preaching her 'Tatwa Gyan' (i.e. the wisdom, deep insight and truthful knowledge about the essential truths/reality of this existence) (12).

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He said—'Oh you timid and recreant one! Your husband is not worthy to be lamented and mourned for. Why do you lament and grieve for him? Think properly and tell me who is your real husband—this body that is lying in your front, or the Jiva (the soul, the Atma, the life giving force or pure consciousness inside the creature) which resides in it? (13).

(If this gross body is your husband, then—) It is made of the five gross elements (air, fire, water, earth, sky) and consists of skin, flesh, blood and bones. It has been born (created) out of a combination of such factors as time and circumstance, deeds and actions (and their effects), and the inherent qualities, virtues and characteristics of a creature in their various permutations and combinations. And that gross body is still lying in front of you (14).

मन्यसे जीवमात्मानं जीवस्तर्हि निरामयः। न जायते न म्रियते न तिष्ठति न गच्छति।। 15।।
न स्त्री पुमान्वा षण्ढो वा जीवः सर्वगतोऽव्ययः। एक एवाद्वितीयोऽयमाकाशवदलेपकः।
नित्यो ज्ञानमयः शुद्धः स कथं शोकमर्हति।। 16।।

manyase jīvamātmānaṃ jīvastarhi nirāmayaḥ/
na jāyate na mriyate na tiṣṭhati na gacchati//
na strī pumānvā ṣaṇḍho vā jīvaḥ sarvagato'vyayaḥ/
eka evādvitīyo'yamākāśavadalepakaḥ/
nityo jñānamayaḥ śuddhaḥ sa kathaṃ śokamarhati//

And, on the contrary, if you regard the Jiva (the soul, the living entity or conscious factor) as your husband, then Jiva is eternal, changeless and without any blemishes or faults. It neither takes birth nor dies; it neither remains steady and unmoving nor comes and goes (15). Jiva (the soul, Atma) is all-pervading and is imperishable, without decay and without an end or beginning. It is neither a male, nor a female, nor a genderless hermaphrodite. But, at the same time, it is peerless, matchless and unique; it remains untarnished, unaffected and without faults, blemishes and attachments like the sky; it is eternal, truthful and everlasting; it is an embodiment of wisdom, truthful knowledge and enlightenment; and it is pure and uncorrupted. Then how can it be worthy of lamentation, mourning, grief, regret and remorse of any kind' (16).

तारोवाच

देहोऽचित्काष्ठवद्राम जीवो नित्यश्चिदात्मकः। सुखदुःखादिसम्बन्धः कस्य स्याद्राम मे वद।। 17।।

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tārovāca

deho'citkāṣṭhavadrāma jīvo nityaścidātmakaḥ /
sukhaduḥkhādisambandhaḥ kasya syādrāma me vada //

Tara asked, 'The body is inanimate and perishable like a piece of wood, while the Jiva (soul, Atma, pure consciousness) is eternal and conscious. It cannot be destroyed. Then tell me, with what or with whom does one have the so-called 'different relationships' which causes so much sorrows and happiness to him?' (17).

श्रीराम उवाच

अहङ्कारादिसम्बन्धो यावद्देहेन्द्रियैः सह। संसारस्तावदेव स्यादात्मनस्त्वविवेकिनः ।। 18 ।।
मिथ्यारोपितसंसारो न स्वयं विनिवर्तते। विषयान्ध्यायमानस्य स्वप्ने मिथ्यागमो यथा ।। 19 ।।

śrīrāma uvāca

ahaṅkārādisambandho yāvaddehendriyaiḥ saha /
saṃsārastāvadeva syādātmanastvavivekinaḥ //
mithyāropitasaṃsāro na svayaṃ vinivartate /
viṣayāndhyāyamānasya svapne mithyāgamo yathā //

Sri Ram replied—'As long as one has any relationship or attachment with the body and the sense organs that arouses the notion of Ahankar (pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness) in him about his body as being 'his' or his 'self', and which is incumbent and inherent with the false perception of 'I', 'me', 'mine' etc. in relation with the body, the Jiva (the living being) is ignorant of the difference (distinction) between the 'Atma' (pure consciousness; soul) and 'Anatma' (that which is not 'Atma'). In other words, the creature is ignorant and unaware of the truth about what is real and what is unreal. This results in relationships that are the causes of happiness and sorrows in the world (because these relationships are limited to the body and not to the soul; and once the creature separates himself from the body, such relationships cease to have any relevance for him) (18).

The world has been falsely imposed on the Atma (i.e. it is erroneous to treat the world as having any truthful essence, life and consciousness—which are the hallmarks of the Atma—in it simply because it shows virtual signs of activity and life as if it had Atma or was a personification of the Atma). In other words, the Atma has been erroneously identified with the so-called 'living' or animate world. But it (i.e. this misconception, delusion, ignorance, lack of truthful

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knowledge about the reality and truth behind the facade of illusion) is not removed without the emergence of Gyan (wisdom, deep insight and truthful knowledge, enlightenment). It is similar to the case where a person, who constantly thinks about the pleasure of the sense organs or about this materialistic world, dreams of it while asleep, but these dreams are nothing but an illusionary image, a mirage or a misleading deception created by the power of his sub-conscious mind to imagine (19).

अनाद्यविद्यासम्बन्धात्तत्कार्याहंकृतेस्तथा। संसारोऽपार्थकोऽपि स्याद्रागद्वेषादिसङ्कुलः।। 20।।
मन एव हि संसारो बन्धश्चैव मनः शुभे। आत्मा मनः समानत्वमेत्य तद्गतबन्धभाक्।। 21।।

anādyavidyāsambandhāttatkāryāhaṅkṛtestathā /
saṃsāro'pārthako'pi syādrāgadveṣādisaṅkulaḥ //
mana eva hi saṃsāro bandhaścaiva manaḥ śubhe /
ātmā manaḥ samānatvametya tadgatabandhabhāk //

Endless ignorance and its resultant involvement in various actions and deeds that are steeped in ego, pride, arrogance and haughtiness governs the working of this world which, inspite of being false and totally illusionary, still is full of the notions of attachments, infatuations, yearnings, desires etc. as well as of enmity, discord, malice, hatred, envy, jealousy etc.[1] (20).

Oh the blessed and auspicious one! It is the Mana (heart and mind; the emotions and thoughts; the inclinations and dispositions; the intentions and purpose; the wishes and desires of the creature) that creates or imagines or is the harbinger of this mundane world as well as its entanglements[2] (21).

[Note—[1]Ignorance of the falsehood of this world prevents a creature from indulging in it, because he thinks that 'he' is doing such and such deed with the body which he treats as his own and his real identity. This sets off a chain of events, whereby he expects a result for his efforts and wants to enjoy them or feels that he is suffering from them, and thereby gets hooked to this endless chain. Then, there would definitely be some unfulfilled things that he yearns to do next, and that 'next' never ends. He feels proud of his achievements and regrets his misadventures, which traps him in the snare of false happiness and false sorrows. He forgets, in his ignorance, that the world which seems so real is perishable and it can never provide him with either eternal happiness or sorrows, for these are like a see-saw, rising and declining in an endless oscillation.

[2]The world as well as its entanglements and attachments are only due to

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the activity of the Mana as defined above, and are the function of the mind and the heart. That is, the mind visualises that there is something called world and gets involved in it emotionally using the medium of the heart, though the intelligence and discriminatory faculty will tell the Jiva that all the world and its incumbent attachments and relations are false and deceptive. The involvement of the discriminatory intellect is the field of Gyan, which tells the creature to think and then decide what the truth is.]

यथा विशुद्धः स्फटिकोऽलक्तकादिसमीपगः। तत्तद्वर्णयुगाभाति वस्तुतो नास्ति रञ्जनम्।। 22।।
बुद्धीन्द्रियादिसामीप्यादात्मनः संसृतिर्बलात्। आत्मा स्वलिङ्गं तु मनः परिगृह्य तदुद्भवान्।। 23।।
कामान् जुषन् गुणैर्बद्धः संसारे वर्ततेऽवशः। आदौ मनोगुणान् सृष्ट्वा ततः कर्माण्यनेकधा।।24।।

yathā viśuddhaḥ sphaṭiko'laktakādisamīpagaḥ/
tattadvarṇayugābhāti vastuto nāsti rañjanam//
buddhīndriyādisāmīpyādātmanaḥ saṃsṛtirbalāt/
ātmā svaliṅgaṃ tu manaḥ parigṛhya tadudbhavān//
kāmān juṣan guṇairbaddhaḥ saṃsāre vartate'vaśaḥ/
ādau manoguṇān sṛṣṭvā tataḥ karmāṇyanekadhā//

Even as the crystal/quartz (Sfatik), though being inherently pure and clear in hue (shade and colour), appears to be of the dark colour of the resinous substance called Lac when in contact with it, inspite of the fact that it (the crystal or quartz) does not have any such colour of its own, the Atma (the subtle, sublime, ethereal, pure, conscious, eternal Soul) mistakenly identifies itself with and believes in the existence of the world when it comes in contact with the Buddhi (the mind-intellect complex) and Indris (the sense organs of the body), resulting in the Atma being ensnared in the trap of sorrows and happiness generated by the latter.

Atma, having once accepted the existence of the mind-heart complex called the subtle body of the creature, gets influenced by this company. The stimuli (inputs) that the mind receives from the external world through the different organs of perception, effects or influences the Atma to such an extent that it starts to enjoy or suffer from these stimuli (even as one is invariably influenced by the company that he keeps). As a result, it gets tied down (or bogged down) by characters such as 'Raag' (attachments, infatuations, desires) and 'Dwesh' (enmity, ill-will, malice, envy, jealousy etc.) which are so typical of this world, and remains shackled to them and keeps swirling in the whirlpool created by them in the form of this world.

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In the beginning, the Atma visualises the existence of such emotions and notions in the world as Raag and Dwesh (as defined above), and then creates the various characteristics of the Mana (mind-heart complex as defined above) based upon and in consonant to these perceptions. Then by the aggregate combination (i.e. various permutations and combinations) of these, it does (gets involved in doing) so many deeds (22-24).

[Note—The Atma would have been better off if it had not allowed itself to believe the mind and the heart. They mislead it even as a king is mislead by unwise ministers. The mind and heart make the Atma fall in the trap of false beliefs because it sees the world through the prism of the mind and the heart. If on the contrary it had relied on wisdom or Gyan, it would have seen through the delusion and the trap into which it is falling inadvertently.]

शुक्ललोहितकृष्णानि गतयस्तत्समानतः। एवं कर्मवशाज्जीवो भ्रमत्याभूतसम्प्लवम्।। 25।।

śuklalohitakṛṣṇāni gatayastatsamānataḥ /
evaṃ karmavaśājjīvo bhramatyābhūtasamplavam //

The deeds are of three types—viz. 'Shukla' (literally white or pure, which is a metaphor for righteous and auspicious deeds, e.g., repetition of the holy name of the Lord, spiritualism, meditation, sacrifices and other righteous deeds and noble actions etc.), 'red coloured' (or rust coloured, indicative of blood and violence, e.g. sacrifice involving animal slaughter), and 'Krishna' (literally dark, which is a metaphor for things that are unrighteous and unholy, e.g. drinking, indulgences etc.). The destiny of the Atma is according to these deeds (which are called Satvic, Rajsic and Tamsic respectively). In this manner the creature (Jiva) keeps falling in the endless cycle of birth and death till the time of dooms-day (25).

[Note :—See also Lanka Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 51-52.]

सर्वोपसंहृतौ जीवो वासनाभिः स्वकर्मभिः। अनाद्यविद्यावशगस्तिष्ठत्यभिनिवेशतः।। 26।।
सृष्टिकाले पुनः पूर्ववासनामानसैः सह। जायते पुनरप्येवं घटीयन्त्रमिवावशः।। 27।।

sarvopasaṃhṛtau jīvo vāsanābhiḥ svakarmabhiḥ /
anādyavidyāvaśagastiṣṭhatyabhiniveśataḥ //
sṛṣṭikāle punaḥ pūrvavāsanāmānasaiḥ saha /
jāyate punarapyevaṃ ghaṭīyantramivāvaśaḥ //

Even at the time of dooms-day when all the five elements (earth,

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water, fire, air, sky) which make up this visible world are dissolved in one single homogenous entity, the Atma along with its accumulated wealth of action/deeds and their consequences, its unfilled desires, yearnings and wishes, its inherent inclinations and tendencies that have characterised it so far, remains sheathed (covered, enveloped) in a shell of eternal ignorance (just like creatures hibernate in the arctic circle during severe winters when the earth is covered with ice, only to jump back to life when the circumstances become favourable to foster life) (26).

When the new universe is created, it is reborn under compulsions of its previous desires and inherent inclinations and tendencies (which had encased/sheathed it in the form of ignorance during the period of hibernation between the end of the last creation and the emergence of the new creation) like a clock-work (27).

[Note :—Verse nos. 23-27 describes why a soul is reborn again and again, and how the first creatures make their appearance when a new universe is recreated after the annihilation of the earlier one.]

यदा पुण्यविशेषेण लभते सङ्गतिं सताम्। मद्भक्तानां सुशान्तानां तदा मद्विषया मतिः ।। 28 ।।
मत्कथाश्रवणे श्रद्धा दुर्लभा जायते ततः। ततः स्वरूपविज्ञानमनायासेन जायते ।। 29 ।।

yadā puṇyaviśeṣeṇa labhate saṅgatiṃ satām/
madbhaktānāṃ suśāntānāṃ tadā madviṣayā matiḥ//
matkathāśravaṇe śraddhā durlabhā jāyate tataḥ/
tataḥ svarūpavijñānamanāyāsena jāyate//

When due to the ripening or maturity of some auspicious noble deeds done by the Atma it has the opportunity of communion (contact, interaction) with my devotees or great souls who are inherently calm, serene and tranquil, then it gets an opportunity to divert its mind, heart and intellect away from the world and concentrate or focus it on me (28).

This creates (ignites) its interest in my divine stories, which is very difficult in the first instance. By hearing my divine stories and having faith, conviction and firm belief in them, it (the creature, the Atma) comes to know (realise) about my truthful form and nature (29).

[Note :—Verse nos. 28-29 describe how, after all, the creature can break free of this endless cycle—it is done by diverting the mind from the pleasures of the senses towards spiritualism through the medium of divine stories about the glories of the Lord Sri Ram.]

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तदाचार्यप्रसादेन वाक्यार्थज्ञानतः क्षणात्। देहेन्द्रियमनः प्राणाहङ्कृतिभ्यः पृथक्स्थितम्।। 30।।
स्वात्मानुभवतः सत्यमानन्दात्मानमद्वयम्। ज्ञात्वा सद्यो भवेन्मुक्तः सत्यमेव मयोदितम्।।31।।

tadācāryaprasādena vākyārthajñānataḥ kṣaṇāt /
dehendriyamanaḥ prāṇāhaṅkṛtibhyaḥ pṛthaksthitam //
svātmānubhavataḥ satyamānandātmānamadvayam /
jñātvā sadyo bhavenmuktaḥ satyameva mayoditam //

At that time, either due to the influence of the profound teachings and graceful blessings of the creature's Guru regarding the essential 'great truths' and their basic meanings (see Uttar Kand, canto 5, verse nos. 24-27 and Baal Kand, Canto 7, verse nos. 40-41 and its foot note), or by experiencing them first hand, the creature (the Jiva) begins to realise that its Atma (i.e. pure consciousness, the microcosmic soul), which is an embodiment of supreme bliss, peace and tranquility, is separate and distinct from the gross body, the sense organs, the mind-heart complex, the life giving winds, as well as other extraneous influences such as the notion of having Ahankar (pride, ego, vanity, arrogance and haughtiness) etc. As a result, it is liberated and freed from the shackles tying it down to the deluding, artificial, entrapping mundane world (i.e. the creature gets emancipation and salvation of its soul). Oh Tara! I have told you the real and absolute truth (30-31).

[Note :—The emphasis here is on realising that Atma, the microcosmic fraction of the eternal, blissful supreme macrocosmic Soul is distinct from all other things compositely called this mundane world, including the body (gross and subtle) of the creature.]

एवं मयोदितं सम्यगालोचयति योऽनिशम्। तस्य संसारदुःखानि न स्पृशन्ति कदाचन।। 32।।
त्वमप्येतन्मया प्रोक्तमालोचय विशुद्धधीः। न स्पृश्यसे दुःखजालैः कर्मबन्धाद्विमोक्ष्यसे।।33।।

evaṃ mayoditaṃ samyagālocayati yo'niśam /
tasya saṃsāraduḥkhāni na spṛśyanti kadācana //
tvamapyetanmayā proktamālocaya viśuddhadhīḥ /
na spṛśyase duḥkhajālaiḥ karmabandhādvimokṣyase //

Those who constantly contemplate on this spiritual knowledge that I have just described to you with wisdom and deep insight, are not troubled or touched by any of the sorrows associated with this world (32). You should also think deeply about this teaching of mine with a pure, uncorrupted mind. By doing this, sorrows, miseries, grief, troubles and tribulations of all kinds that are associated with the world

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will never touch you or bother you. You will be freed from the fetters originating from the deeds done by you (i.e. the deeds done by the body and their entangling web of reactions and counter reactions) (33).

[Note :—Verse nos. 13-33 can be called the gospel of Sri Ram for Tara.]

पूर्वजन्मनि ते सुभ्रु कृता मद्भक्तिरुत्तमा। अतस्तव विमोक्षाय रूपं मे दर्शितं शुभे।। 34।।
ध्यात्वा मदूपमनिशमालोचय मयोदितम्। प्रवाहपतितं कार्यं कुर्वत्यपि न लिप्यसे।। 35।।

pūrvajanmani te subhru kṛtā madbhaktiruttamā /
atastava vimokṣāya rūpaṃ me darśitaṃ śubhe //
dhyātvā madrūpamaniśamālocaya mayoditam /
pravāhapatitaṃ kāryaṃ kurvatyapi na lipyase //

Oh the auspicious one with pleasant eye-brows! In your previous birth, you have had excellent devotion for me. So, oh the auspicious one! I have given you my Darshan in order to provide you with liberation and deliverance from this mundane, deluding, artificial and entangling world (34). You should remember my divine form night and day, and deeply ponder on my teachings. By doing so, even while doing the deeds that you have to do in this world as a result of your past, you shall not be attached to them (i.e. be indulgent in them)' (35).

श्रीरामेणोदितं सर्वं श्रुत्वा तारातिविस्मिता। देहाभिमानजं शोकं त्यक्त्वा नत्वा रघूत्तमम्।। 36।।
आत्मानुभवसन्तुष्टा जीवन्मुक्ता बभूव ह। क्षणसङ्गममात्रेण रामेण परमात्मना।। 37।।
अनादिबन्धं निर्धूय मुक्ता सापि विकल्मषा। सुग्रीवोऽपि च तच्छ्रुत्वा रामवक्त्रात्समीरितम्।।38।।
जहावज्ञानमखिलं स्वस्थचित्तोऽभवत्तदा। ततः सुग्रीवमाहेदं रामो वानरपुङ्गवम्।। 39।।

śrīrāmeṇoditaṃ sarvaṃ śrutvā tārātivismitā /
dehābhimānajaṃ śokaṃ tyaktvā natvā raghūttamam //
ātmānubhavasantuṣṭā jīvanmuktā babhūva ha /
kṣaṇasaṅgamamātreṇa rāmeṇa paramātmanā //
anādibandhaṃ nirdhūya muktā sāpi vikalmaṣā /
sugrīvo'pi ca tacchrutvā rāmavaktrātsamīritam //
jahāvajñānamakhilaṃ svasthacitto'bhavattadā /
tataḥ sugrīvamādehaṃ rāmo vānarapuṅgavam //

Hearing this marvelous discourse (teachings) of Sri Ram, Tara was very amazed and overwhelmed. She forsook all the sorrows, anguish, ill-will and lamentations associated with the body (i.e. that my brother-in-law has caused the death of my husband who was beloved to me,

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that my husband is dead and I cannot live without him etc.), bowed reverentially to the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) (36), realised the true nature of the Atma (the soul, pure self, pure consciousness, microcosmic fraction of the all powerful, all-pervading, omniscient macrocosmic supreme Soul), felt very contented and blissful at this realisation, and was instantly liberated (i.e. she was freed from the delusions that tie a creature to this illusionary world of mundane existence and consisting of an endless cycle of birth and death). By the momentary contact with Sri Ram who is the Parmatma (supreme Soul personified) (37), she was able to cut the fetters caused by eternal ignorance and, consequentially, became sinless, faultless, freed from all the blemishes and ties, and was thus liberated.

Hearing the sweet, pleasant and comforting words from the mouth of Sri Ram himself, words which were like nectar, all the consternations, ignorance, doubts and confusions that Sugriv might have had also faded away, and he too became calm, peaceful, relaxed, reassured and serene. After that, Sri Ram told the best among the monkeys (i.e. Sugriv) as follows (38-39)—

भ्रातुर्ज्येष्ठस्य पुत्रेण यद्युक्तं साम्परायिकम्। कुरु सर्वं यथान्यायं संस्कारादि ममाज्ञया।।40।।
तथेति बलिभिर्मुख्यैर्वानरैः परिणीय तम्। वालिनं पुष्पके क्षिप्त्वा सर्वराजोपचारकैः।।41।।
भेरीदुन्दभिनिर्घोषैर्ब्राह्मणैर्मन्त्रिभिः सह। यूथपैर्वानरैः पौरैस्तारया चाङ्गदेन च।।42।।
गत्वा चकार तत्सर्वं यथाशास्त्रं प्रयत्नतः। स्नात्वा जगाम रामस्य समीपं मन्त्रिभिः सह।।43।।

bhrāturjyeṣṭhasya putreṇa yaduktaṃ sāmparāyikam /
kuru sarvaṃ yathānyāyaṃ saṃskārādi mamājñayā //
tatheti balibhirmukhyairvānarai pariṇīya tam /
vālinaṃ puṣpake kṣiptvā sarvarājopacārakaiḥ //
bherīdundubhinirghoṣairbrāhmaṇairmantribhiḥ saha /
yūthapairvānarai pauraistārayā cāṅgadena ca //
gatvā cakāra tatsarvaṃ yathāśāstraṃ prayatnataḥ /
snātvā jagāma rāmasya samīpaṃ mantribhiḥ saha //

'On my orders, you must help Angad to do all the traditional last rites for your elder brother as sanctioned by the scriptures. This is my instruction for you' (40). Saying 'alright', Sugriv, accompanied by chief monkeys, put the dead body of Vaali on a flower bedecked bier, did all the formalities befitting a royal funeral (41) to the accompaniment of various musical instruments such as kettledrums and trumpets. He

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was joined by Brahmins, ministers, monkey chieftains, citizens, Tara and Angad. This ritual was done as per sanctions of the scriptures with great care and diligence. Thence, after having purified himself by bathing etc., Sugriv returned to where Sri Ram was, along with his ministers (42-43).

नत्वा रामस्य चरणौ सुग्रीवः प्राह हृष्टधीः। राज्यं प्रशाधि राजेन्द्र वानराणां समृद्धिमत्॥44॥
दासोऽहं ते पादपद्मं सेवे लक्ष्मणवच्चिरम्। इत्युक्तो राघवः प्राह सुग्रीवं सस्मितं वचः॥45॥

natvā rāmasya caraṇau sugrīvaḥ prāha hṛṣṭadhīḥ/
rājyaṃ praśādhi rājendra vānarāṇāṃ samṛddhimat//
dāso'haṃ te pādapadmaṃ seve lakṣmaṇavacciram/
ityukto rāghavaḥ prāha sugrīvaṃ sasmitaṃ vacaḥ//

On returning back, Sugriv bowed gladly and cheerfully at the feet of Sri Ram and said, 'Oh the King of kings! (I request you to—) Rule over this prosperous kingdom of monkeys (44). I am but your humble servant (i.e. your devoted follower or humble subordinate). Like Laxman, I shall also keep on serving your feet'. Hearing this, Raghav (Sri Ram) smiled sweetly and said (45)—

त्वमेवाहं न सन्देहः शीघ्रं गच्छ ममाज्ञया। पुरराज्याधिपत्ये त्वं स्वात्मानमभिषेचय॥46॥
नगरं न प्रवेक्ष्यामि चतुर्दश समाः सखे। आगमिष्यति मे भ्राता लक्ष्मणः पत्तनं तव॥47॥

tvamevāhaṃ na sandehaḥ śīghraṃ gaccha mamājñayā/
purarājyādhipatye tvaṃ svātmānamabhiṣecaya//
nagaraṃ na pravekṣyāmi caturdaśa samāḥ sakhe/
āgamiṣyati me bhrātā lakṣmaṇaḥ pattanaṃ tava//

'There is no doubt that I and you are one (i.e. there is no difference between you and me). On my command, you should go immediately and get yourself crowned on the throne of Kishkindha (46). Oh friend! I cannot enter any city for fourteen years (on the command of my father). Hence, my brother Laxman shall attend at the time of your coronation on my behalf (47).

[Note :—With reference to verse no. 46 when Sri Ram said that there is no difference between him and Sugriv, he meant that the Atma or the eternal soul is the same in all the creatures. It establishes the oneness and the non dual nature of the soul. It is by our corrupt and ill-informed wisdom and thoughts, our inherent tendencies, and the deluding shadow cast by ignorance on the pure, conscious soul which then becomes sheathed or veiled with this dark shadow of ignorance, that the creature

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becomes engrossed and indulgently involved in all the futile activities of the world. This distinguishes a worldly creature from the enlightened creature. The former distinguishes between 'me' and 'you', while the latter sees seamless uniformity in the whole creation.

Further, it was a polite gesture of Sri Ram when he said that there was no difference between them, for he wished to send a subtle signal to Laxman and others that they should not treat Sugriv with any sort of disdain and contempt for his betrayal of his brother and then allowing himself to be crowned over his dead body. No one should insult and humiliate Sugriv, for that would be like insulting the Lord himself.]

अङ्गदं यौवराज्ये त्वमभिषेचय सादरम्। अहं समीपे शिखरे पर्वतस्य सहानुजः।। 48।।
वत्स्यामि वर्षदिवसांस्ततस्त्वं यत्नवान् भव। किञ्चित्कालं पुरे स्थित्वा सीतायाः परिमार्गणे।।49।।

aṅgadaṃ yauvarājye tvamabhiṣecaya sādaram/
ahaṃ samīpe śikhare parvatasya sahānujaḥ//
vatsyāmi varṣadivasāṃstatastvaṃ yatnavān bhava/
kiñcitkālaṃ pure sthitvā sītāyāh parimārgaṇe//

You must anoint Angad as a prince regent (or heir apparent). [Please see note to verse no. 58, Canto 2.] During the rainy season, I shall stay with my brother Laxman on the nearby summit of the mountain (48). You should stay (spend) some time in the city (to establish your authority, come to grips with the problems associated with the transition of power, scuttle any sparks of dissension or revolt, and having seated yourself firmly on the throne and taken care of the administration of the kingdom) you must make efforts to find out about the whereabouts of Sita (49).

साष्टाङ्गं प्रणिपत्याह सुग्रीवो रामपादयोः। यदाज्ञापयसे देव तत्तथैव करोम्यहम्।। 50।।
अनुज्ञातश्च रामेण सुग्रीवस्तु सलक्ष्मणः। गत्वा पुरं तथा चक्रे यथा रामेण चोदितः।।51।।
सुग्रीवेण यथान्यायं पूजितो लक्ष्मणस्तदा। आगत्य राघवं शीघ्रं प्रणिपत्योपतस्थिवान्।।52।।

sāṣṭāṅgaṃ praṇipatyāha sugrīvo rāmapādayoḥ/
yadājñāpayase deva tattathaiva karomyaham//
anujñānaśca rāmeṇa sugrīvastu salakṣmaṇaḥ/
gatvā puraṃ tathā cakre yathā rāmeṇa coditaḥ//
sugrīveṇa yathānyāyaṃ pūjito lakṣmaṇastadā/
āgatya rāghavaṃ śīghraṃ praṇipatyopatasthivān//

Then Sugriv prostrated himself (to pay his obeisance) at Sri Ram's feet and said, 'Oh Lord! I shall do as you order me' (50). Then, having

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got the permission from Sri Ram, Sugriv went back to Kishkindha along with Laxman and did everything exactly as instructed by the Lord (51). After that, having received suitable honours and respects from Sugriv, Laxman came back to Raghav (Sri Ram), bowed at his feet and presented himself at his service (52).

ततो रामो जगामाशु लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः। प्रवर्षणगिरेरूर्ध्वं शिखरं भूरिविस्तरम्।। 53।।
तत्रैकं गह्वरं दृष्ट्वा स्फाटिकं दिप्तिमच्छुभम्। वर्षवातातपसहं फलमूलसमीपगम्।
वासाय रोचयामास तत्र रामः सलक्ष्मणः।। 54।।

tato rāmo jagāmāśu lakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ /
pravarṣaṇagirerūrdhvaṃ śikharaṃ bhūrivistaram //
tatraikaṃ gahvaraṃ dṛṣṭvā sphāṭikaṃ dīptimacchubham /
varṣavātātapasahaṃ phalamūlasamīpagam /
vāsāya rocayāmāsa tatra rāmaḥ salakṣmaṇaḥ //

Thence, Sri Ram, accompanied by Laxman, immediately went to the broad summit of Mt. Prabarshan (53). There he saw a bright and clean cave made of crystals. It provided shelter from wind, rain and heat of the sun. Eatables such as edible roots, stems and fruits were available in abundance nearby. Seeing them, Sri Ram and Laxman decided to stay there (54).

[Note :—It must have been a plateau on the mountain, a short of table-land or grass-land conducive to comfortable habitation.]

दिव्यमूलफलपुष्पसंयुते मौक्तिकोपमजलौघपल्वले।
चित्रवर्णमृगपक्षिशोभिते पर्वते रघुकुलोत्तमोऽवसत्।। 55।।

divyamūlaphalapuṣpasaṃyute mauktikopamajalaughapalvale /
citravarṇamṛgapakṣiśobhite parvate raghukulottamo'vasat //

Then the best in the clan of king Raghu (Sri Ram) began to dwell on that Prabarshan mountain which was endowed with divine edible roots, stems and fruits, had lakes and ponds with water which was as clear as pearl, and which was adorned (i.e. made pleasant and attractive) by the presence of different types of animals belonging to the deer family (or other non-violent, docile animals), as well as by birds of different varieties (55).

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Kishkindha Kand — Canto 4

Sri Ram's gospel to Laxman—elucidation of Kriya Yog

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

तत्र वार्षिकदिनानि राघवो लीलया मणिगुहासु सञ्चरन्।
पक्वमूलफलभोगतोषितो लक्ष्मणेन सहितोऽवसत्सुखम्।।1।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tatra vārṣikadināni rāghavo līlayā maṇiguhāsu sañcaran /
pakvamūlaphalabhogatoṣito lakṣmaṇena sahito'vasatsukham //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! At that place, Raghav (Sri Ram) along with Laxman spent his time in a carefree, playful manner, wandering among the different caves which were bright and luminescent as if made of gems, ate ripe fruits, edible roots and stems, and spent the days of the rainy seasons most happily (1).

वातनुन्नजलपूरितमेघानन्तरस्तनितवैद्युतगर्भान् ।
वीक्ष्य विस्मयमगाद्गजयूथान्यद्वदाहितसुकाञ्चनकक्षान्।।2।।

vātanunnajalapuritameghānantarastanitavaidyutagarbhān /
vīkṣya vismayamagādgajayūthānyadvadāhitasukāñcanakakṣān //

Watching the dark, rain bearing clouds impelled forward by winds, he used to be very amazed, because those clouds, with lightening streaking, dazzling and reflecting through them, appeared like herds of elephants walking majestically with golden hangings such as pendants and festoons oscillating and swaying from their sides (2).

नवघासं समास्वाद्य हृष्टपुष्टमृगद्विजाः। धावन्तः परितो रामं वीक्ष्य विस्फारितेक्षणाः।। 3।।
न चलन्ति सदाध्याननिष्ठा इव मुनीश्वराः। रामं मानुषरूपेण गिरिकाननभूमिषु।। 4।।
चरन्तं परमात्मानं ज्ञात्वा सिद्धगणा भुवि। मृगपक्षिगणा भूत्वा राममेवानुसेविरे।। 5।।

navaghāsaṃ samāsvādya hṛṣṭapuṣṭamṛgadvijāḥ /
dhāvantaḥ parito rāmaṃ vīkṣya visphāritekṣaṇāḥ //
na calanti sadādhyānaniṣṭhā iava munīśvarāḥ /
rāmaṃ mānuṣarūpeṇa girikānanabhūmiṣu //
carantaṃ paramātmānaṃ jñātvā siddhagaṇā bhuvi /
mṛgapakṣigaṇā bhūtvā rāmamevānusevire //

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Deer (and other pleasant, docile and harmless animals) as well as birds of different varieties—who had become healthy, with robust and strong bodies, by virtue of feeding upon fresh green grass—stopped dumbstruck and gazed unblinkingly whenever they happened to glance at Sri Ram while they were frolicking and running around hither and thither as is the wont of animals and birds in the forest (3). They stood still, transfixed and immobile like most exalted monks, hermits and sages in deep meditation. Coming to know that Sri Ram (the supreme Brahma, the Lord) is roaming about in the form of a human on the surface of the earth amongst the mountains and forests (4), many mystics and realised souls assumed the form of deer and birds, and always remained in his (Sri Ram's) service (by entertaining him, not letting him feel lonely, and generally keeping him company and the surroundings inhabited, vibrant and lively with fauna) (5).

सौमित्रिरेकदा राममेकान्ते ध्यानतत्परम्। समाधिविरमे भक्त्या प्रणयाद्विनयान्वितः।। 6।।
अब्रवीद्देव ते वाक्यात्पूर्वोक्ताद्विगतो मम। अनाद्यविद्यासम्भूतः संशयो हृदि संस्थितः।।7।।

saumitrirekadā rāmamekānte dhyānatatparam/
samādhivirame bhaktyā praṇayādvinayānvitaḥ//
abravīddeva te vākyātpūrvoktādvigato mama/
anādyavidyāsambhūtaḥ saṃśayo hṛdi saṃsthitaḥ//

One day, when Sri Ram had woken up from his meditative trance and was alone, the son of Sumitra (Laxman) asked him most affectionately and politely (6), 'By your teachings which you had made to me earlier (in Ayodhya Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 19-47, and Aranya Kand, Canto 4, Verse nos. 19-55), the doubts and confusions of my heart originating from eternal ignorance have been removed/ eliminated (6-7).

इदानीं श्रोतुमिच्छामि क्रियामार्गेण राघव। भवदाराधनं लोके यथा कुर्वन्ति योगिनः।। 8।।
इदमेव सदा प्राहुर्योगिनो मुक्तिसाधनम्। नारदोऽपि तथा व्यासो ब्रह्मा कमलसम्भवः।।9।।
ब्रह्मक्षत्रादिवर्णानामाश्रमाणां च मोक्षदम्। स्त्रीशूद्राणां च राजेन्द्र सुलभं मुक्तिसाधनम्।
तव भक्ताय मे भ्रात्रे ब्रूहि लोकोपकारकम्।। 10।।

idānīṃ śrotumicchāmi kriyāmārgeṇa rāghava/
bhavadārādhanaṃ loke yathā kurvanti yoginaḥ//
idameva sadā prāhuryogino muktisādhanam/
nārado'pi tathā vyāso brahmā kamalasambhavaḥ//

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brahmakṣatrādivarṇānāmāśramāṇāṃ ca mokṣadam /
strīśūdrāṇāṃ ca rājendra sulabhaṃ muktisādhanam /
tava bhaktāya me bhrātre brūhi lokopakārakam //

But oh Raghav (Sri Ram), I want to hear about the method and the way by which the Yogis (ascetics) worship, honour and adore you in this world, the path generally known as 'Kriya Marg' (system of worship incorporating physical rituals) (8). All the ascetics, (the celestial sage) Narad, (the great sage) Vyas as well as Brahma, who was born out of a divine lotus—all of them call it as the path of getting liberation and deliverance (9).

Oh Rajendra (King of kings, i.e. Sri Ram)! According to them, this is the only mean by which emancipation and salvation can be achieved by and made possible for different 'Varans' (the four castes or classes into which the society has been classified) such as the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and others as well as the different 'Ashrams' (the four phases into which the life of a man has been divided, such as Brahmacharis etc.)[1]. Even women and Shudras (the low castes) can also achieve emancipation and salvation easily by following this path of worship. I am your ardent devotee and beloved brother. So you should be kind enough to describe those means (ways and methods of Kriya Yog) to me as a measure of public welfare and good' (10).

[Note—[1]The society has been divided into 4 sections or classes by ancient sages to regulate its functioning by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. These 4 sections are— (a) Brahmins —the learned and teaching class; they also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas —they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas —they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life, and (d) the Shudras —the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.

The life of a man is divided into four segments or Ashrams — (a) Brahmacharya —this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and

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continence as well as leading a regimental life style, (b) Grihastha —when a person has studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the second phase called Grihastha Ashram which is a householder life. He marries, raises a family, produces wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and miseries of a family life and dealings with this deceptive world with all their accompanying horrifying problems, (c) Vaanprastha —this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas —this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation and mediation, living a life of total renunciation and begging for food, and single mindedly aiming for emancipation and salvation.]

श्रीराम उवाच

मम पूजाविधानस्य नान्तोऽस्ति रघुनन्दन। तथापि वक्ष्ये सङ्क्षेपाद्यथावदनुपूर्वशः।। 11।।
स्वगृह्योक्तप्रकारेण द्विजत्वं प्राप्य मानवः। सकाशात्सद्गुरोर्मन्त्रं लब्ध्वा मद्भक्तिसंयुतः।।12।।

śrīrāma uvāca

mama pūjāvidhānasya nānto'sti raghunandana /
tathāpi vakṣye saṅkṣepādyathāvadanupūrvaśaḥ //
svagṛhyoktaprakāreṇa dvijatvaṃ prāpya mānavaḥ /
sakāśātsadgurormantraṃ labdhvā madbhaktisaṃyutaḥ //

Sri Ram replied (i.e. preached to Laxman), 'Oh Raghunandan (the son of king Raghu's clan; Laxman)! There is no end to the methods of worshipping, adoring and honouring me, of paying obeisance and respect to me, or showing reverence and veneration for me. Inspite of that, I am describing them to you, as they are, in brief (11). A person endowed (inspired, infused) with my Bhakti (sincere devotion, faith, belief, admiration, dedication, submission, reverence and affection for the Lord) should first observe all the formal sacraments to get himself formally initiated into the particular section and class of society to which he belongs, and then go to (approach) a Guru (an attained, realised, learned, truthful and honest moral preceptor) with sincerity, faith and devotion towards him. Then he should accept a Mantra (holy name of the Lord; a group of divine syllables or word symbols which have divine mystical powers) from him (12).

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तेन सन्दर्शितविधिर्मामेवाराधयेत्सुधीः। हृदये वानले वार्चेत्प्रतिमादौ विभावसौ।। 13।।

tena sandarśitavidhirmāmevārādhayetsudhīḥ /
hṛdaye vānale vārcetpratimādau vibhāvasau //

Then that wise person should worship, revere and adore no one else but me in his heart (while meditating and contemplating), in the sacred fire (while performing fire sacrifices), in an idol/image (while worshipping in any shrine), or the Sun (as in offering oblations to the rising and setting sun) etc. by the method shown by his Guru (13).

[Note :—It means that he should visualise me or focus his attention on me while adopting any of the methods of formal worship— whether it is a fire, an idol, a portrait, the sun, et-al. For all practical purposes he is worshipping me in all those symbols of my myriad divine forms.]

शालग्रामशिलायां वा पूजयेन्मामतन्द्रितः। प्रातःस्नानं प्रकुर्वीत प्रथमं देहशुद्धये।। 14।।
वेदतन्त्रोदितैर्मन्त्रैर्मृल्लेपनविधानतः। सन्ध्यादि कर्म यन्नित्यं तत्कुर्याद्विधिना बुधः।।15।।

śālagrāmaśilāyāṃ vā pūjayenmāmatandritaḥ /
prātaḥsnānaṃ prakurvīta prathamaṃ dehaśuddhaye //
vedatantroditairmantrairmṛllepanavidhānataḥ /
sandhyādi karma yannityaṃ tatkuryādvidhinā budhaḥ //

He should worship me in a 'Shaligram stone' if for some reason the above form of worship is not possible. Wise worshippers should first purify (cleanse) their bodies by applying (rubbing) clay or earth etc. on their bodies and then having a bath in the early morning while chanting holy Mantras (hymns) from the Vedas or magical chants from the Tantras (a religious treatise supposed to be compiled by Lord Shiva which contains mystical formulas for the attainment of super natural powers). After that, he should do his routine, daily rituals of worship, such as observing the sacrament of Sandhya etc. (a special ritual done by the Aryans three times a day—in the morning, midday and at sunset) (14-15).

[Note to verse no. 14 :—A Shaligram stone is generally smooth, oblong or egg-shaped—in fact it symbolises the featureless, attributeless, formless vision of the Lord. A stone is regarded as an inanimate object signifying the fact that the Supreme Being does not 'do' anything himself as is clear from the interpretation of Baal Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 32-33, 35 and 47 as well as Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 20-24 and Kishkindha Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 72. It is the conviction and firmness of faith that transforms that inanimate piece of stone into an image or reflection of

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the supreme Lord Sri Ram, complete with all his mystical and divine powers and potentials. The Lord's Maya or delusion creating powers makes that lifeless stone, which is inherently and obviously a 'non-doer' of anything, appear to be the 'doer' of so many deeds. In other words, that piece of stone acquires stupendous mystical powers and prowess possessed by the supreme Lord who is the creator, the sustainer and the annihilator of the world.

Further as the fine line dividing the treatment of that stone as a mere piece of pebble and it being the representative form of the Viraat Purush is governed by firmness of faith, belief and conviction. It is this same virtue that separates a Mantra from being divine, mystical, holy and pure, and being endowed with stupendous powers that can achieve great objectives, as opposed to being just a jumble of lifeless letters or meaningless words.

The very form of the Shaligram—which is generally smooth to touch, dark in colour, and oval, oblong or round in shape—indicates the concept of the cosmic ovum or egg that harbours the entire world in it in a hidden form. In itself any egg possesses all the necessary requirements that are basically needed to initiate and sustain the process of life, but left to its own devices it is absolutely inert and cannot show any sign of hidden life in it. But when it is fertilised with the life-injecting sperm symbolising faith, belief, devotion and conviction, it assumes the powers to unfold this huge, vast expanse of the universe, both at the macro level in the form of the Viraat Purush who, in association with his infinite cosmic energy, is synonymous with Nature, and at the micro level in the form of the individual creature.

So we can deduce safely that the Shaligram stone is the whole cosmos in a miniature form. And by worshipping it as a representative of the supreme Lord, we are actually worshipping his nameless, formless, attributeless and indefinable form.]

सङ्कल्पमादौ कुर्वीत सिद्ध्यर्थं कर्मणां सुधीः। स्वगुरुं पूजयेद्भक्त्या मद्बुद्ध्या पूजको मम ॥ 16 ॥
शिलायां स्नपनं कुर्यात्प्रतिमासु प्रमार्जनम्। प्रसिद्धैर्गन्धपुष्पाद्यैर्मत्पूजा सिद्धिदायिका ॥ 17 ॥

saṅpalpamādau kurvīta siddhyarthaṃ karmaṇāṃ sudhīḥ /
svaguruṃ pūjayedbhaktyā madbuddhyā pūjako mama //
śilāyāṃ snapanaṃ kuryātpratimāsu pramārjanam /
prasiddhairgandhapuṣpādyairmatpūjā siddhidāyikā //

Those wise persons who wish to worship me should first make a firm resolve/vow about the deeds or objectives that he wants to accomplish successfully. Then, treating his Guru as being no different from me, he should worship him with due devotion (16). If my idol is

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like a stone (e.g., Shaligram), then it should be bathed (with water or milk), but if it is like a consecrated image (as found in temples), then it should be sponged (wiped) with a wet cloth and dried using a dry cloth. Then it should be duly worshipped by using available pleasant and auspicious scents (fragrances) and flowers. My worship done in this manner is quick to give rewards and show their auspicious results (17).

[Note :—(i) Careful analysis of verse no. 16 clears the doubt about why a person should revere his Guru—the Guru is worshipped as a representative or embodiment of Sri Ram. In fact, the worshipping is done of Sri Ram and not of the person of the Guru *par-se*. That the obeisance and adoration shown by the worshipper towards his Guru—who in this case is in the role of Sri Ram—goes to the latter's head and makes him arrogant and haughty and stokes his ego of being someone special, is no fault of the concept or doctrine as enshrined in this verse, and neither is it the fault of the seeker. (ii) The three entities of worship according to verse nos. 16-17 are—(a) the Guru, (b) the Shaligram and (c) the idol/image of the Lord all representing the supreme Brahm.

The word 'Guru' has two parts—viz. 'Gu' meaning darkness, and 'Ru' meaning light. Hence the combined word indicates a person who can remove the darkness of ignorance of his follower by showing him the light of knowledge. He is the one who is expected to have risen above self vested interests and keeps the welfare of the disciple as his main objective. He is the one who has transcended the mundane and has acquired sublime awareness of the supreme Reality, because only those who are themselves aware of anything can hope to tell others about it. A true Guru is treated as being equivalent to the 'Trinity Gods'—(1) Brahma, the creator, because he creates or helps to take birth good virtues and noble qualities in his disciple; (2) Vishnu, the sustainer, because he nourishes, sustains and helps to inculcate and develop wisdom and enlightenment in his disciple and leads him on the truthful path; and (3) Shiva, the concluder, because he helps to end, conclude and eliminate ignorance and negative traits in his disciple. He is 'God like' because he functions in all these capacities at the same time, besides being exalted in all knowledge, being virtuous, of high moral character and beyond reproach, being a source of unbound spiritual energy, being self realised and enlightened, and being eternal in the sense that what he advises to his disciple, the path he shows, the light that he lights in the dark heart of the creature, makes him immortal. Therefore, a Guru is honoured for the divine virtues that he represents and embodies, that he teaches and implements in his life, for the divinity, for the Lord and for the personification of the great teachings of the scriptures that he exemplifies.

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It in not his physical body that is of any value for veneration, for the soul and not the body is venerable.

There is a minor Upanishad called 'Dwayo-panishad' which describes the chief characteristics of a true Guru. It has only seven Mantras. This Upanishad is being cited here verse by verse to clearly highlight the main features of a Guru:—'(a) Verse nos.1-2= A person is called a Guru if he is endowed with enlightenment and wisdom making him well versed and skilled in the Vedas, both in their literal knowledge as well as in the profound wisdom and the ethereal and eclectic metaphysical and spiritual philosophy they contain, who is an ardent devotee and sincere follower of Lord Vishnu, who is free from such negative traits as jealousy, envy and malice, who is well versed and skilled in the various holy and divine Mantras, their usage, their ethereal importance and spiritual significance as well as all other matters related with them, who is sincerity devoted to those Mantras and has firm belief, conviction and faith in them, who seeks the shelter and refuge of those Mantras, who is pure and immaculate, uncorrupt and unpolluted in any form, who is devoted and dedicated to his own Guru, and who is well versed and skilled not only in all the Purans but all other scriptures as well.

(b) Verse no.3= A person is called a Guru who has a comprehensive and holistic knowledge and understanding of all the scriptures, and who not only preaches righteousness, probity and propriety as well as nobility of thoughts and actions but also lives them and implements them in their letter and spirit in his personal life.

(c) Verse no. 4= The letter 'Gu' means darkness, while the letter 'Ru' means that which remove that darkness. Hence, Guru is one who removes the darkness representing ignorance and delusions that are so typically associated with this deluding world.

(d) Verse no.5= A true Guru is equivalent to the supreme and transcendental Brahm; he is the ultimate destination for a seeker; he is a fount of the supreme knowledge and the source of the best of such knowledge; he is deemed to be the best and the greatest asset for a man.

(e) Verse no.6= A Guru is the best thing a wise seeker seeks and searches for, he is the best and the supreme place for seeking refuge and shelter with, and he being a dispenser of the profoundest of wisdom and knowledge is deemed to be a person who is the most important, who has the highest standards of greatness and magnificence, who is most dignified and meritorious, who is most weighty and significant, and who is most distinct and outstanding in all aspects.

(f) Verse no.7= Pronouncing the word 'Guru' even once enables the aspirant to access liberation and deliverance from this entrapping and deluding world. All his efforts are deemed to have been successful by simply saying this powerful word sincerely. Such a man does never come

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back (enters the cycle of birth and death) in this world again—verily, this is the truth. Those who understand this fact correctly get the desired fruit'.]

अमायिकोऽनुवृत्त्या मां पूजयेन्नियतव्रतः। प्रतिमादिष्वलङ्कारः प्रियो मे कुलनन्दन।। 18।।
अग्नौ यजेत हविषा भास्करे स्थण्डिले यजेत्। भक्तेनोपहृतं प्रीत्यै श्रद्धया मम वार्यपि।। 19।।
किं पुनर्भक्ष्यभोज्यादि गन्धपुष्पाक्षतादिकम्। पूजाद्रव्याणि सर्वाणि सम्पाद्यैवं समारभेत्।। 20।।

amāyiko'nuvṛttyā māṃ pūjayenniyatavrataḥ/
pratimādiṣvalaṅkāraḥ priyo me kulanandana//
agnau yajeta haviṣā bhāskare sthaṇḍile yajet/
bhaktenopahṛtaṃ prītyai śraddhayā mama vāryapi//
kiṃ punarbhakṣyabhojyādi gandhapuṣpākṣatādikam/
pūjādravyāṇi sarvāṇi sampādyaivaṃ samārabhet//

A man should forsake all impostering, conceit, deceit, pretensions, stratagem, fraud, deceptions, tricks and duplicity, and worship, adore and honour me regularly by the method prescribed (advised, shown) by the Guru. Oh Kulnandan (the honourable son of our clan; Laxman)! Decorating idols etc. are most dear (pleasing) to me (because it helps to inculcate affection for me and my divine form) (18).

(If one does not want to worship/adore/honour me in a lifeless stone idol, or cannot come to terms with this sort of worship/adoration/honour—) If he wishes to worship me in the sacred fire, then it should be done by offerings of sacrifices to the holy fire. And if one wants to worship me in the Sun, then a design of the Sun should be made in the worship.

Even simple water offered to me by my devotee (with sincerity, humility and dedication) causes immense happiness to me i.e. I am very pleased with it, and such a devotee is very dear to me (19), then what to talk of those who worship me by elaborate offerings, eatables etc. as well as by the use of costly herbs, scents, fragrances, beautiful flowers, rice and other materials and paraphernalia required for formal ritual of worship. (It is but natural that all these things do please me when I am so pleased by simple water!). So, the worshipper should assemble all the paraphernalia and accoutrements before starting the process of formally worshipping me (20).

[Note :—Verse no. 19 eliminates the necessity of elaborate offerings to the Lord in order to worship, adore and honour him. A humble cup of water offered with love and affection to Sri Ram is valued more by him than a truck load of gems and jewels, so to speak. Further, it should be

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noted that Sri Ram himself has said that there is no fixed, binding, sacrosanct and inviolable law or rule for worship—nothing is sacrosanct except faith, belief, conviction, sincerity, humility, devotion, love, affection and dedication. There are many ways to worship the Lord—through the medium of the Guru, the idol, the image, the Shaligram, the fire sacrifice, the Sun, or even by offering of as humble a thing as water, or elaborate rituals with chanting of great Mantras, great fire sacrifices involving huge riches and liberal doses of offerings and costly paraphernalia. Nevertheless, everything depends on the mental caliber of the devotee or seeker, whether he intends to show the world that he is a great worshipper of the Lord, or whether he worships his Lord as his personal affair as one has with one's loved and dear ones. One medicine cannot suit all the patients, and the Lord also rewards them according to the form and intent of the worship. So, dogmas and pretensions, showmanship and lack of sincerity have no place in love for Sri Ram. Everyone is free and at liberty to worship and revere him in the way he likes—as long as devotion, submission, dedication and firm conviction is present. Please see the following verse no. 30 below which says so explicitly.]

चैलाजिनकुशैः सम्यगासनं परिकल्पयेत्। तत्रोपविश्य देवस्य सम्मुखे शुद्धमानसः ।। 21 ।।
ततो न्यासं प्रकुर्वीत मातृकाबहिरान्तरम्। केशवादि ततः कुर्यात्तत्त्वन्यासं ततः परम् ।। 22 ।।
मन्मूर्तिपञ्जरन्यासं मन्त्रन्यासं ततो न्यसेत्। प्रतिमादावपि तथा कुर्यान्नित्यमतन्द्रितः ।। 23 ।।

cailājinakuśaiḥ samyagāsanaṃ parikalpayet /
tatropaviśya devasya sammukhe suddhamānasaḥ //
tato nyāsaṃ prakūrvīta mātṛkābahirāntaram /
keśavādi tataḥ kūryāttattvanyāsaṃ tataḥ param //
manmūrtipañjaranyāsaṃ mantranyāsaṃ tato nyaset /
pratimādāvapi tathā kuryānnityamatandritaḥ //

[Sri Ram now describes the detailed step by step process to be followed during the ritualistic process of formal worship. It is to be noted that it is based on the 'Karma Kaand' as prescribed in the Vedas. The Lord has already stated previously in verse no.19 that he does not require elaborate exercises to be pleased and be merciful and gracious on his devotees, for even water offered with devotion and faith is sufficient to please him in the absence of all the elaborate paraphernalia and accoutrements required for elaborate rituals. However, the formal process is as follows—]

To begin with, one should make a seat by laying grass, deer skin and cloth (one on top of the other in above sequence), and sit on it in

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front of the 'God or the personal deity to be worshipped', called a person's 'Ishta Deva' (literally, the personal God; the family deity or the favourite Lord) with a purified, uncorrupted, undistracted and focused mind (21).

After that, one should invoke the external gross forms as well as the internal subtle forms of the great Mothers, called 'Matrikas'[1], and do 'Nyas'[2] with them (which is to submit a pledge before them of concentrating and establishing one's mind on worshipping of the chosen deity. Then he should invoke and meditate upon the twenty four divine names of the Lord such as Keshav etc.

Next, he should meditate and contemplate upon the 'Tatwa' and invest the deity with it. [These are the essential and fundamental principles, virtues and elements that are to be invoked and worshipped in that deity or entity which the person endeavours to honour and adore] (22).

After that, he should mentally establish and endow the image of the deity with a skeleton and pledge trust in its divine and sublime body.

Next, when the gross idol or the lifeless image of the deity has already been mentally endowed with a gross body having a skeleton and possessing mystical powers represented by the establishment of the divine Mothers and the Tatwa in it like that of an incarnation or manifestation of the Lord himself, the worshipper should invest it with life by symbolically injecting it in by the use of Mantras meant for this purpose.[3]

This process of consecration of the idol or image of the Lord should be done without any laziness and indolence. In a similar manner, he should concentrate and firmly imagine my presence in other mediums such as portraits etc. (23).

[Note :—[1]The word 'Matrika' means the divine Mothers representing the cosmic energy in creation. Their worship is deemed essential in Tantra worship. These Mothers are the following seven—Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda. Their external forms refers to their forms as the female counterparts of the seven divine Gods, while their subtle forms refer to the elementary virtues that they represent, such as the power to create (Brahmi), the power to supersede all and bring to an end/conclude/abort other powers (Maheshwari), the virtues of virgin chastity and immaculate purity (Kaumari), the powers of sustenance, providing nourishment and bringing about development

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(Vaishnavi), the power to dive into the unknown and rescue all that is good, righteous and auspicious (Varahi), the power to rule over the rest of the creation as its queen (Indrani), and the power required to face enemies and adversities (Chamunda).

[2]The word 'Nyas' refers to concentration, meditation, focusing the attention on a particular thing as per established and prescribed procedure. In this case, it is to visualise the supreme Lord in the idol or statue or portrait etc.

[3]This process replicates the process that occurred at the time of creation when the Viraat Purush created man in his image, and all the Gods representing the various vital functions of life entered the gross body of the man as the vital winds and other elementary functions. But at the end, the Viraat had to enter that man himself as his Pran to enable the lifeless body to get up and move about as a living man.]

कलशं स्वपुरो वामे क्षिपेत्पुष्पादि दक्षिणे। अर्घ्यपाद्यप्रदानार्थं मधुपर्कार्थमेव च।। 24।।
तथैवाचमनार्थं तु न्यसेत्पात्रचतुष्टयम्। हृत्पद्मे भानुविमले मत्कलां जीवसंज्ञिताम्।। 25।।
ध्यायेत्स्वदेहमखिलं तया व्याप्तमरिन्दम्। तामेवावाहयेन्नित्यं प्रतिमादिषु मत्कलाम्।। 26।।

kalaśaṃ svapuro vāme kṣipetpuṣpādi dakṣiṇe /
arghyapādyapradānārthaṃ madhuparkārthameva ca //
tathaivācamanārthaṃ tu nyasetpātracatuṣṭayam /
hṛtpadme bhānuvimale matkalāṃ jīvasaṃjñitām //
dhyāyetsvadehamakhilaṃ tayā vyāptamarindama /
tāmevāvāhayennityaṃ pratimādiṣu matkalām //

One should keep in front of him a Kalash (a water pot or pitcher) on the left hand side, and flowers etc. on the right side. Similarly, four vessels should be kept for the purpose of offering 'Arghya' (i.e. an offering fit to be offered to God; the vessel used for this purpose is usually boat shaped), 'Padya' (i.e. the water with which the feet of God or any revered person is washed), 'Madhu Purk' (i.e. sweets, such as honey) and 'Aachman' (i.e. the rinsing of the mouth by water before the beginning of religious ceremonies; here the water is sipped using a very small wooden spatula as a mere formality) (24).

Thence, one should meditate upon my conscious, microcosmic, subtle form as the 'Jiva' (Atma or soul of the living being) in his heart which is shaped like a divine lotus and is as pure, brilliant and radiant as the sun (25).

Oh the vanquisher of enemies! Then one should perceive (conceptualize, imagine) that his whole body is infused, imbued,

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soaked and pervaded by that vital life imparting vitality and force called the conscious Jiva (i.e. his whole being is pulsating with life and consciousness). At the same time, the same feeling should be imagined (visualised, conceived) in the idol or portrait while worshipping it (that the Lord is present in it, pervades it; that it is not an inanimate piece of metal or stone or paper portrait but infused and injected by the glorious super consciousness) (26).

पाद्यार्घ्याचमनीयाद्यैः स्नानवस्त्रविभूषणैः। यावच्छक्योपचारैर्वा त्वर्चयेन्माममायया।। 27।।
विभवे सति कर्पूरकुङ्कुमागरुचन्दनैः। अर्चयेन्मन्त्रवन्नित्यं सुगन्धकुसुमैः शुभैः।। 28।।
दशावरणपूजां वै ह्यागमोक्तां प्रकारयेत्। नीराजनैर्धूपदीपैर्नैवेद्यैर्बहुविस्तरैः।। 29।।

pādyārghyācamanīyādyaiḥ snānavastravibhūṣaṇaiḥ /
yāvacchakyopacārairvā tvarcayenmāmamāyayā //
vibhave sati karpūrakuṅkumāgarucandanaiḥ /
arcayenmantravannityaṃ sugandhakusumaiḥ śubhaiḥ //
daśāvaraṇapūjāṃ vai hyāgamoktāṃ prakārayet /
nīrājanairdhūpadīpairnaivedyairbahuvistaraiḥ //

Using 'Padya', 'Ardhya', 'Aachman' (see verse no. 24), 'Snan' (i.e. ritualistic bathing of the deity), 'Vastra' (i.e. clothing the deity), 'Vibushan' (i.e. offering or decorating the deity with ornaments) etc.—or using any other material that is easily and conveniently available—one should worship me without any impostering, deception, duplicity, insincerity and deceit (27). If he (the worshipper) is rich (or well-off), he should routinely worship me with 'Kapur' (camphor), 'Kumkum' (a red powder used on auspicious occasions), 'Agar' (coloured powder made from sandalwood), 'Chandan' (sandalwood), and most beautiful and fragrant flowers while chanting and repeating my holy Mantras (28). Besides this, he should pay obeisance and homage to me by showing (i.e. using) 'Nirajan' (showing of ceremonial light consisting of five wicks), 'Dhup' (perfumes), 'Deep' (lighted oil lamps), various types of sweetmeats etc. according to the way established and sanctioned by the Vedas (29).

श्रद्धयोपहरेन्नित्यं श्रद्धाभुगहमीश्वरः। होमं कुर्यात्प्रयत्नेन विधिना मन्त्रकोविदः।। 30।।
अगस्त्येनोक्तमार्गेण कुण्डेनागमवित्तमः। जुहुयान्मूलमन्त्रेण पुंसूक्तेनाथवा बुधः।। 31।।

śraddhayopaharennityaṃ śraddhābhugahamīśvaraḥ /
homaṃ kuryātprayatnena vidhinā mantrakovidaḥ //

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agastyenoktamārgeṇa kuṇḍenāgamavittamaḥ /
juhuyānmūlamantreṇa puṃsūktenāthavā budhaḥ //

All the products (as described in previous verses) should be offered daily with great reverence and honour, because I, the supreme Lord, is hungry for respect, reverence, veneration, honour, faith, belief, devotion, dedication and conviction more than anything else. Those who are expert in Mantras should then do 'Havan, (i.e. ritual of the fire sacrifice) properly in the sanctioned and traditional way (30).

(Describing how to do the fire sacrifice, Sri Ram elaborates—) Those who are adept in the processes established by the scriptures should make a fire pit according to the design prescribed by sage Agastya, and then offer oblations to the fire God in it by using the holy Mantras given by one's Guru. Such fire sacrifices are to be done by the males as sanctioned by the scriptures (31).

अथवौपासनाग्नौ वा चरुणा हविषा तथा। तप्तजाम्बूनदप्रख्यं दिव्याभरणभूषितम्।। 32।।
ध्यायेदनलमध्यस्थं होमकाले सदा बुधः। पार्षदेभ्यो बलिं दत्त्वा होमशेषं समापयेत्।। 33।।

athavaupāsanāgnau vā caruṇā haviṣā tathā /
taptajāmbūnadaprakhyaṃ divyābharaṇabhūṣitam //
dhyāyedanalamadhyasthaṃ homakāle sadā budhaḥ /
pārṣadebhyo baliṃ dattvā homaśeṣaṃ samāpayet //

Otherwise, one can perform the fire sacrifice in the fire lit according to 'Agnihotra' (i.e. the Vedic fire ritual in which the holy Mantras used are prescribed by the Vedas. In such a sacrifice, the Mantra given by the Guru is not used) by using offerings of cooked food and other requisite necessary offerings needed for such sacrifices.

While doing the Havan (fire sacrifice or worship of the fire God) in such a manner, a wise aspirant or seeker should always imagine (visualise) the supreme transcendental Lord being inherently and subtly present in the sacred fire in the glorious, brilliant, splendorous and radiant form of the Fire God, having a brilliant radiance similar to that of molten gold, duly adorned or decorated from top to toe in various divine and beautiful ornaments and decorations.

After that, he must make some offerings as sacrifice for my subordinates and foll owers, and thereby complete (wind up) the Havan (32-33).

[Note :—The word 'Vaali' appearing in the second line of verse no.33

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does not mean animal sacrifice. A word has many connotations and applications. Hear it means a fraction of what is given as offering, presents, gift or oblation offered to the Fire God should be kept aside for the humble devotees of the Lord, and be given to them as charity or alms. So it means that the worshipper must not forget any devotee or follower of Sri Ram while remembering or worshipping the God. If he offers anything to Sri Ram, he must offer similar things to his followers or devotees. The Lord is not a selfish master or king who usurps everything that is offered to him for his own self while treating his dependants as third rate servants, slaves, serfs or vassals. He is very magnanimous, benevolent and munificent. He will accept anything only if it is also offered to his devotees, otherwise the Lord would not have it.]

ततो जपं प्रकुर्वीत ध्यायेन्मां यतवाक् स्मरन्। मुखवासं च ताम्बूलं दत्त्वा प्रीतिसमन्वितः।। 34।।
मदर्थे नृत्यगीतादि स्तुतिपाठादि कारयेत्। प्रणमेद्दण्डवद्भूमौ हृदये मां निधाय च।। 35।।

tato japaṃ prakurvīta dhyāyenmāṃ yatavāk smaran /
mukhavāsaṃ ca tāmbūlaṃ dattvā prītīsamanvitaḥ //
madarthe nṛtyagītādi stutipāṭhādi kārayet /
praṇameddaṇḍavadbhūmau hṛdaye māṃ nidhāya ca //

Thence, he (the worshipper) should observe silence, remember and meditate/concentrate upon me, and repeat my holy name. Then he should affectionately offer betel leaves and other mouth-fresheners to me (34). Dances, singing of devotional songs and chanting of Stotras (hymns) should be organised in my honour. The worshipper should establish (enshrine) my attractive and enchanting image in his heart, and pay obeisance to me by prostrating himself like a stick on the ground before me (symbolising his humility and submission to the supreme Lord) (35).

शिरस्याधाय मद्दत्तं प्रसादं भावनामयम्। पाणिभ्यां मत्पदे मूर्ध्नि गृहीत्वा भक्तिसंयुतः।। 36।।
रक्ष मां घोरसंसारादित्युक्त्वा प्रणमेत्सुधीः। उद्वासयेद्यथापूर्वं प्रत्यग्ज्योतिषि संस्मरन्।।37।।

śirasyādhāya maddattaṃ prasādaṃ bhāvanāmayam /
pāṇibhyāṃ matpade mūrdhni gṛhītvā bhaktisaṃyutaḥ //
rakṣa mā ghorasaṃsārādityuktvā praṇametsudhīḥ /
udvāsayedyathāpūrvaṃ pratyagjyotiṣi saṃsmaran //

He should accept my 'Prasad' ((a) food and other offerings made to God, (b) anything received as a blessing or gift from God) with full devotion and respect as a token of my divine blessing upon him, and then keep it on his head (i.e. accept it with all humility, respect and

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honour, and feel obliged and privileged on having received it). He should keep my feet upon his head, as a token of total submission to me, with the greatest of reverence, devotion and humility (36). He should bow before me, saying 'Oh Lord! Save me from this terrible, formidable and horrifying world'.

Then a wise worshipper should think (imagine, conceptualise or visualise) that the super-conscious factor which was invoked and perceived as having been established in my idol/statue/image or portrait (see verse no. 23) has now entered (or has got transferred) in him (i.e. the worshipper) as a spark of eternal, divine, sublime and ethereal effulgence of fluorescent light. Then he should put down to rest my consecrated idol, statue, image or portrait (37).

[Note :—Verse no. 37 indicates that once the worship is completed and the worshipper goes back to his routine worldly chores, he should keep aside the idol or portrait either by closing the closet, or covering it by a sheet or curtain if he is offering his prayers in his household as part of his daily ritual, or immersing it in a river etc. if that worship is part of a greater religious festival or ceremony.

Another significant point is that the Lord, who had been conceived or visualised as having being present in that idol or portrait as a divine entity and super consciousness, has entered the heart of the worshipper at the time of conclusion of worship in the form of a divine spark leaving that image and entering the body of the worshipper (verse no.37). By this simple device the Lord becomes one with the worshipper, he remains with him every second of the latter's existence in the form of the divine spark present in his bosom, whether he is waking or sleeping. The Lord is not separate from him, locked up in a Pooja/worship room or closet, as it were! With this pristine philosophy in context, the worshipper will always be assured of the Lord's presence with him, in thick and thin, and this would also help him to be on his guard and mind all his actions, because the Lord is literally policing all his actions and deeds!

The Lord has left that idol or portrait and has enshrined himself in the worshipper's inner self i.e. in the heart-like throne of his devotee (verse no.25). This is a very important verse from a general layman's and householder's point of view. It implies that the Lord is no where to seek but in the very heart of the seeker. If he can't see and visualise the Lord in his own heart and thinks that the idol situated in the worship room is the Lord, then he has not understood what the real meaning of worship is.]

एवमुक्तप्रकारेण पूजयेद्विधिवद्यदि। इहामुत्र च संसिद्धिं प्राप्नोति मदनुग्रहात्।।38।।
मद्भक्तो यदि मामेवं पूजां चैव दिने दिने। करोति मम सारूप्यं प्राप्नोत्येव न संशयः।।39।।

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evamuktaprakāreṇa pūjayedvidhivadyadi /
ihāmūtra ca saṃsiddhiṃ prāpnoti madanugrahāt //
madbhakto yadi māmevaṃ pūjāṃ caiva dine dine /
karoti mama sārūpyaṃ prāpnotyeva na saṃśayaḥ //

Those persons who worship me according to the above laid down prescribed method, get fulfillment of all their desires both in this world while alive as well as in the after-world after their death (38). If my devotee worships me in the above manner daily and as a matter of routine and habit, he becomes one with me—there is no doubt about it (39).

इदं रहस्यं परमं च पावनं मयैव साक्षात्कथितं सनातनम्।
पठत्यजस्त्रं यदि वा शृणोति यः स सर्वपूजाफलभाङ् न संशयः।।40।।

idaṃ rahasyaṃ paramaṃ ca pāvanaṃ
mayaiva sākṣātkathitaṃ sanātanam /
paṭhatyajasraṃ yadi vā śṛṇoti yaḥ
sa sarvapūjāphalabhāṅ na saṃśayaḥ //

This most holistic and esoteric system of worship and adoration that was hitherto un-divulged, generally unknown and untold, is most holy, sublime, straight-forward, eternally truthful and the proper way of worshipping me. It is me (Sri Ram) who has described it to you myself. Those people who would even read or listen to it shall, verily, get the benefit of doing the entire Pooja or observing the full process of formal ritualistic worship' (40).

[Note :—(i) As is evident by this verse, it is not even necessary to actually 'do' the elaborate exercise of ritualistic formal worship. Further, verse no. 19 emphasis that mere water is sufficient offering for the Lord, and verse no. 30 says that the Lord is hungry for nothing else except respect, reverence, sincerity, dedication, faith, love and devotion. The implied meaning to these verses is that one can please the Lord in many ways, provided he has sincerity and devotion. (ii) See also Lanka Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 58-63 in the context of verse nos. 11-40 of this Canto.]

एवं परात्मा श्रीरामः क्रियायोगमनुत्तमम्। पृष्टः प्राह स्वभक्ताय शेषांशाय महात्मने।।41।।
पुनः प्राकृतवद्रामो मायामालम्ब्य दुःखितः। हा सीतेति वदन्नैव निद्रां लेभे कथञ्चन।।42।।

evaṃ parātmā śrīrāmaḥ kriyāyogamanuttamam /
pṛṣṭaḥ prāha svabhaktāya śeṣāṃśāya mahātmane //
punaḥ prākṛtavadrāmo māyāmālambya duḥkhitaḥ /
hā sīteti vadannaiva nidrāṃ lebhe kathañcana //

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In this manner, Sri Ram the Parmatma (supreme Soul) preached to the most exalted incarnation of Sheshnath (Laxman) about the most excellent process of worship called 'Kriya Yog' (i.e. physical, ritualistic worship) (41).

Then Sri Ram reverted back to his earlier role as an ordinary human, and taking the support of his deluding powers, he resumed to lament and grieve (for Sita) once again like any other ordinary man. He used to spend the entire nights without any sleep, wailing in utmost grief and calling out in anguish— 'Oh Sita!' (42).

[Note :— Verse nos. 11-41 can be called the gospel of Sri Ram for Laxman. It should be read along with the Gospel of Sri Ram to Kaushalya in Uttar Kand, Canto 7, verse nos. 53-82 to understand the wider ramification of the meaning, process and importance of doing worship of the Lord.]

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे तत्र किष्किन्धायां सुबुद्धिमान्। हनूमान्प्राह सुग्रीवमेकान्ते कपिनायकम्॥ 43॥
शृणु राजन्प्रवक्ष्यामि तवैव हितमुत्तमम्। रामेण ते कृतः पूर्वमुपकारो ह्यनुत्तमः॥ 44॥

etasminnantare tatra kiṣkindhāyāṃ subuddhimān /
hanūmānprāha sugrīvamekānte kapināyakam //
śṛṇu rājanpravakṣyāmi tavaiva hitamuttamam /
rāmeṇa te kṛtaḥ pūrvamupakāro hyanuttamaḥ //

At about this time in the city of Kishkindha, the most wise Hanuman said to Sugriv, the king of monkeys, while he was once sitting alone (43), 'Oh king! Listen, I speak about your welfare, (so, you must not get annoyed at me and pay heed to what I say). Look, Sri Ram has shown such great favours to you (i.e. he has made you the king of Kishkindha and has helped you when you were in dire straits) (44).

कृतघ्नवत्त्वया नूनं विस्मृतः प्रतिभाति मे। त्वत्कृते निहतो वाली वीरस्त्रैलोक्यसम्मतः॥ 45॥
राज्ये प्रतिष्ठितोऽसि त्वं तारां प्राप्तोऽसि दुर्लभाम्। स रामः पर्वतस्याग्रे भ्रात्रा सह वसन्सुधीः॥ 46॥
त्वदागमनमेकाग्रमीक्षते कार्यगौरवात्। त्वं तु वानरभावेन स्त्रीसक्तो नावबुद्ध्यसे॥ 47॥

kṛtaghnavattvayā nūnaṃ vismṛtaḥ pratibhāti me /
tvatkṛte nihato vālī vīrastrailokyasammataḥ //
rājye pratiṣṭhito'si tvaṃ tārāṃ prāpto'si durlabhām /
sa rāmaḥ parvatāgre bhrātā saha vasansudhīḥ //
tvadāgamanamekāgramīkṣate kāryagauravāt /
tvaṃ tu vānarabhāvena strīsakto nāvabuddhyase //

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But it appears to me that you have most ungratefully and thanklessly forgotten it. Ah! It was for you that he had slayed Vaali who was renowned for his bravery and courage in the three worlds (Triloki), and has installed you on the throne. It was due to him that you got Tara who is most difficult to obtain or even to access. [Tara was the wife of Vaali, so Hanumans means that you could not have laid your hands on her if Vaali had been alive.] The wise Sri Ram spends his time along with his brother on the summit of a mountain (Prabarshan) (46), waiting for you to complete his pending work. But having a monkey-like tendency, you have been indulgent in women and have forgotten everything else (47).

[Note :—See also footnote to verse nos. 62-63, Canto 2 of this Kand.]

करोमीति प्रतिज्ञाय सीतायाः परिमार्गणम्। न करोषि कृतघ्नस्त्वं हन्यसे वालिवद्द्रुतम्।। 48।।
हनूमद्वचनं श्रुत्वा सुग्रीवो भयविह्वलः। प्रत्युवाच हनूमन्तं सत्यमेव त्वयोदितम्।। 49।।

karomīti pratijñāya sītāyāḥ parimārgaṇam /
na karoṣi kṛtaghnastvaṃ hanyase vālivaddrutam //
hanūmadvacanaṃ śrutvā sugrīvo bhayavihvalaḥ /
pratyuvāca hanūmantaṃ satyameva tvayoditam //

Regarding Sri Ram's work of searching Sita, you have done nothing yet inspite of promising to him 'I shall certainly do it'. (Refer Canto 1, verse nos. 35-36.) You are very ungrateful, thankless and un-obliging. It appears that you too will enter the jaws (throat) of death like Vaali' (48). Hearing the warning words of Hanuman, Sugriv was petrified with fear and said, 'Oh Hanuman, what you say is correct (49).

शीघ्रं कुरु ममाज्ञां त्वं वानराणां तरस्विनाम्। सहस्राणि दशेदानीं प्रेषयाशु दिशो दश।। 50।।
सप्तद्वीपगतान्सर्वान्वानरानानयन्तु ते। पक्षमध्ये समायान्तु सर्वे वानरपुङ्गवाः।।51।।
ये पक्षमतिवर्तन्ते ते वध्या मे न संशयः। इत्याज्ञाप्य हनूमन्तं सुग्रीवो गृहमाविशत्।। 52।।

śīghraṃ kuru mamājñāṃ tvaṃ vānarāṇāṃ tarasvinām /
sahasrāṇi daśedānīṃ preṣayāśu diśo daśa //
saptadvīpagatānsarvānvānarānānayantu te /
pakṣamadhye samāyāntu sarve vānarapuṅgavāḥ //
ye pakṣamativartante te vadhyā me na saṃśayaḥ /
ityājñāpya hanūmantaṃ sugrīvo gṛhamāviśat //

Now on my orders, quickly send ten thousand swift and agile monkeys in all the ten directions as messengers (50). They should

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summon all the monkeys living in all the seven islands (i.e. continents), and all the brave monkey chieftains should be summoned to come here forthwith within a fortnight (51). Those who do not come here within a fortnight shall be killed (i.e. punished) by me'. Having given these orders to Hanuman, Sugriv went home (52).

सुग्रीवाज्ञां पुरस्कृत्य हनूमान्मन्त्रिसत्तमः। तत्क्षणे प्रेषयामास हरीन्दश दिशः सुधीः।। 53।।
अगणितगुणसत्त्वान्वायुवेगप्रचारान् वनचरगणमुख्यान् पर्वताकाररूपान्।
पवनहितकुमारः प्रेषयामास दूतानतिरभसतरात्मा दानमानादितृप्तान्।।54।।

sugrīvājñāṃ puraskṛtya hanūmānmantrisattamaḥ /
tatkṣaṇe preṣayāmāsa harīndaśa diśaḥ sudhīḥ //
agaṇitaguṇasattvānvāyuvegapracārān
vanacaragaṇamukhyān parvatākārarūpān /
pavanahitakumāraḥ preṣayāmāsa dūtā-
natirabhasatarātmā dānamānāditṛptān //

With express orders from Sugriv, the most wise and proficient minister Hanuman instantly dispatched numerous monkey-messengers in all the ten directions (53). Those chief monkey messengers—who were endowed with countless qualities and virtues, were most famous for their valour and valiance, were as swift and agile as the wind, and were as huge as mountains—were duly honoured and fully satisfied by various gifts and honours, and were then sent by Hanuman, the son of the Wind God, who was very eager to do Sri Ram's work (54).

[Note :—A clever ploy by Sugriv and Hanuman indeed. They had dispatched the monkeys prior to their meeting with Sri Ram so that when the latter enquired of the actions taken by Sugriv, they will have a ready answer—that the initiative has been taken and the ball is rolling. Here, Hanuman has wisely lived up to his role as a good advisor to Sugriv. There were other ministers as well, but none bothered to advise Sugriv to do Sri Ram's work and avoid his wrath.]

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Kishkindha Kand — Canto 5

Sri Ram's grief; Laxman visits Kishkindha and threatens Sugriv

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

रामस्तु पर्वतस्याग्रे मणिसानौ निशामुखे। सीताविरहजं शोकमसहन्निदमब्रतीत्।।1।।
पश्य लक्ष्मण मे सीता राक्षसेन ह्रता बलात्। मृतामृता वा निश्चेतुं न जानेऽद्यापि भामिनीम्।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

rāmastu parvatasyāgre maṇisānau niśāmukhe/
sītāvirahajaṃ śokamasahannidamabravīt//
paśya lakṣmaṇa me sītā rākṣasena hṛtā balāt/
mṛtāmṛtā vā niścetuṃ na jāne'dyāpi bhāminīm//

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! One day, during the first half of the night, when Sri Ram was sitting atop the gem-like summit of the mountain (Pravarshan), he was overwhelmed by grief and remorse at separation from Sita. He said poignantly (1), 'Oh Laxman! Look, my Sita has been forcibly stolen (abducted) by a demon. Whether that chaste and loyal woman is alive or dead—we do not know anything about it. We must do something to ascertain the fact (and find out about the whereabouts of Sita) (2).

जीवतीति मम ब्रूयात्कश्चिद्वा प्रियकृत्स मे। यदि जानामि तां साध्वीं जीवन्तीं यत्र कुत्र वा।।3।।
हठादेवाहरिष्यामि सुधामिव पयोनिधेः। प्रतिज्ञां शृणु मे भ्रातर्येन मे जनकात्मजा।।4।।
नीता तं भस्मसात्कुर्यां सपुत्रबलवाहनम्। हे सीते चन्द्रवदने वसन्ती राक्षसालये।।5।।
दुःखार्त्ता मामपश्यन्ती कथं प्राणान् धरिष्यसि। चन्द्रोऽपि भानुवद्भाति मम चन्द्राननां विना।।6।।

jīvatīti mama brūyātkaścidvā priyakṛtsa me/
yadi jānāmi tāṃ sādhvīṃ jīvantīṃ yatra kutra vā//
haṭhādevāhariṣyāmi sudhāmiva payonidheḥ/
pratijñāṃ śṛṇu me bhrātaryena me janakātmajā//
nītā taṃ bhasmasātkuryāṃ saputrabalavāhanam/
he sīte candravadane vasantī rākṣasālaye//
duḥkhārttā māmapaśyantī kathaṃ prāṇān dhariṣyasi/
candro'pi bhānuvadbhāti mama candrānanāṃ vinā//

If anyone tells me the news that she is alive, he will do a great favour to me. If I come to know that that Sadhvi (an honourable, chaste, loyal, pure and reclusive woman) is alive, then wherever she is (3), I shall soon retrieve her in any manner whatsoever even as Amrit (the

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elixir of life) was extracted from the ocean (by churning it). Oh brother! Listen to my firm determination and a resolute vow—'Any wicked rascal who has abducted my Janki (4), I shall reduce him to ashes along with his sons and both wings of his army, the infantry as well as the mechanised (symbolising all his trappings of strength, valour, courage and fame)'.

Then Sri Ram wailed for Sita remorsefully—'Oh Sita who resembles the Moon! Living in a demon's place (5), how will you manage to keep yourself alive without seeing me and being overcome with grief and anguish at my separation? Alas! Without the moon-faced one (i.e. Sita), even the Moon appears to be as scorching hot as the Sun for me (6).

चन्द्र त्वं जानकीं स्पृष्ट्वा करैर्मां स्पृश शीतलैः। सुग्रीवोऽपि दयाहीनो दुःखितं मां न पश्यति।। 7।।
राज्यं निष्कण्टकं प्राप्य स्त्रीभिः परिवृतो रहः। कृतघ्नो दृश्यते व्यक्तं पानासक्तोऽतिकामुकः।।8।।

candra tvaṃ jānakīṃ spṛṣṭvā karairmāṃ spṛśa śītalaiḥ /
sugrīvo'pi dayāhīno duḥkhitaṃ māṃ na paśyati //
rājyaṃ niṣkaṇṭakaṃ prāpya strībhiḥ parivṛto rahaḥ /
kṛtaghno dṛśyate vyaktaṃ pānāsakto'tikāmukaḥ //

Oh Moon! You should touch Janki (Sita) with your soothing rays first (so that she finds solace and succour from her torments, and gets cooled and comforted by your soothing touch), and then you should touch me with your cool rays. Alas! How cruel, inconsiderate, ungrateful and merciless has Sugriv become that he does not even glance at (bother about) this wretched and miserable me who am overcome with extreme agonies and enormous anguish at the separation from my dear wife (7). Ah! Having got a kingdom devoid of any thorns (i.e. oppositions, enemies, obstacles, hindrances, discontents and revolts), he indulges in drinking, and that lascivious fellow who has become a slave of lust remains surrounded by women, and spends his time with them in a secluded and lonely place (probably his 'Harem'). It is clear that he is most ungrateful and unthankful (8).

नायाति शरदं पश्यन्नपि मार्गयितुं प्रियाम्। पूर्वोपकारिणं दुष्टः कृतघ्नो विस्मृतो हि माम्।। 9।।
हन्मि सुग्रीवमप्येवं सपुरं सहबान्धवम्। वाली यथा हतो मेऽद्य सुग्रीवोऽपि तथा भवेत्।।10।।

nāyāti śaradaṃ paśyannapi mārgayituṃ priyām /
pūrvopakāriṇaṃ duṣṭaḥ kṛtaghno vismṛto hi mām //

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hanmi sugrīvamapyevaṃ sapuraṃ sahabāndhavam /
vālī yathā hato me'dya sugrīvo'pi tathā bhavet //

Even seeing that winter is approaching, he has not come forward (i.e. taken any steps) to search for my dearest Sita. I had done favours to him earlier but that wicked rascal has ungratefully forgotten me (9). (In the same manner as I have slayed Vaali—) I shall kill Sugriv and destroy his city along with his kin. Even as Vaali has been killed at my hands, today Sugriv will meet the same end' (10).

इति रुष्टं समालोक्य राघवं लक्ष्मणोऽब्रवीत्। इदानीमेव गत्वाहं सुग्रीवं दुष्टमानसम्।। 11।।
मामाज्ञापय हत्वा तमायास्ये राम तेऽन्तिकम्। इत्युक्त्वा धनुरादाय स्वयं तूणीरमेव च।।12।।
गन्तुमभ्युद्यतं वीक्ष्य रामो लक्ष्मणमब्रवीत्। न हन्तव्यस्त्वया वत्स सुग्रीवो मे प्रियः सखा।।13।।

iti ruṣṭaṃ samālokya rāghavaṃ lakṣmaṇo'bravīt /
idānīmeva gatvāhaṃ sugrīvaṃ duṣṭamānasam //
māmājñāpaya hatvā tamāyāsye rāma te'ntikam /
ityuktvā dhanurādāya svayaṃ tūṇīrameva ca //
gantumabhyudyataṃ vīkṣya rāmo lakṣmaṇamabravīt /
na hantavyastvayā vatsa sugrīvo me priyaḥ sakhā //

Seeing Raghav (Sri Ram) bitter, angry and peeved, Laxman said, 'Oh Sri Ram! Just give me your orders (or permission). I shall go right now, kill that wicked-hearted and pervert Sugriv immediately, and come back to you' (11).

Seeing that Laxman is ready with a bow and an arrow in his hands, and eager to go (and punish Sugriv) himself, Sri Ram said, 'Oh son! Sugriv is my dear friend. Do not kill him (12-13).

किन्तु भीषय सुग्रीवं वालिवत्त्वं हनिष्यसे। इत्युक्त्वा शीघ्रमादाय सुग्रीवप्रतिभाषितम्।। 14।।
आगत्य पाश्चाद्यत्कार्यं तत्करिष्याम्यसंशयम्। तथेति लक्ष्मणोऽगच्छत्त्वरितो भीमविक्रमः।।15।।

kintu bhīṣaya sugrīvaṃ vālivattvaṃ hanisyase /
ityuktvā śīghramādāya sugrīvapratibhāṣitam //
āgatya paścādyatkāryaṃ tatkariṣyāmyasaṃśayam /
tatheti lakṣmaṇo'gacchattvarito bhīmavikramaḥ //

But instead, just tell him (i.e. threaten, or scare him) that he shall be killed like Vaali, and come back to me soon with his reply. Then, seeing the developments, I shall do whatever is necessary'. Then saying 'alright', the most valorous and valiant Laxman arrived at Kishkindha (14-15).

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किष्किन्धां प्रति कोपेन निर्दहन्निव वानरान्। सर्वज्ञो नित्यलक्ष्मीको विज्ञानात्मापि राघवः ।। 16 ।।
सीतामनुशुशोचार्त्तः प्राकृतः प्राकृतामिव। बुद्ध्यादिसाक्षिणस्तस्य मायाकार्यातिवर्तिनः ।। 17 ।।

kiṣkindhāṃ prati kopena nirdahanniva vānarān /
sarvajño nityalakṣmīko vijñānātmāpi rāghavaḥ //
sītāmanuśuśocārttaḥ prākṛtaḥ prākṛtāmiva /
buddhyādisākṣiṇastasya māyākāryātivartinaḥ //

Having arrived to Kishkindha, he pretended to be so annoyed, furious, merciless and uncompromising that he was ready to turn all the monkeys to ashes. Raghav (Sri Ram) is all knowing, omniscient, and an embodiment of wisdom and enlightenment. Laxmi (in the form of Sita) is always at his service (16).

Inspite of that he appears (pretends) to be deeply moved by the sorrows of separation from Sita like an ordinary man grieves, as a matter of habit, for an ordinary woman. That Lord is a witness to the mind-intellect complex (because he is the pure conscious soul that is distinct from both the gross as well as the subtle bodies of a creature) and is beyond the deluding spell of Maya (which is the magical charm of the Lord himself that holds the entire creation in its awe and spellbound by its magic) (17).

रागादिरहितस्यास्य तत्कार्यं कथमुद्भवेत्। ब्रह्मणोक्तमृतं कर्तुं राज्ञो दशरथस्य हि।। 18 ।।
तपसः फलदानाय जातो मानुषवेषधृक्। मायया मोहिताः सर्वे जना अज्ञानसंयुताः ।। 19 ।।

rāgādirahitasyāsya tatkāryaṃ kathamudbhavet /
brahmaṇoktamṛtaṃ kartuṃ rājño daśarathasya hi //
tapasaḥ phaladānāya jāto mānuṣaveṣadhṛk /
māyayā mohitāḥ sarve janā ajñānasaṃyutāḥ //

He (Sri Ram) is from the various faults such as having 'Raag' (attachments, infatuations, endearments, yearnings or desires) or 'Dwesh' (enmity, malice, ill-will, discord, jealousy, hatred) etc.—then how can he ever have to suffer from a variety of sorrows, anguish, frustrations, grief and their attendant torments and bewilderments of any kind, all of which have their origin in the above (Raag and Dwesh)?

In fact, he has revealed (i.e. incarnated, manifested) himself as a human being only to honour or fulfill the words of Brahma (the creator) and to reward king Dashrath for his austerities and penances (Tapa).

(Another reason is that—) All the people have become servile and

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subservient to Agyan (which is ignorance, lack of truthful knowledge and wisdom, leading the people to all sorts of delusions; they have become wayward and gone astray from the path of enlightenment and wisdom; they have forsaken righteousness, probity, propriety and truth, and have fallen in the dark pit of ignorance and delusions which cause so much consternations and perplexities for them) (18-19).

कथमेषां भवेन्मोक्ष इति विष्णुर्विचिन्तयन्। कथां प्रथयितुं लोके सर्वलोकमलापहाम्।। 20।।
रामायणाभिधां रामो भूत्वा मानुषचेष्टकः। क्रोधं मोहं च कामं च व्यवहारार्थसिद्धये।।21।।
तत्तत्कालोचितं गृह्णन् मोहयत्यवशाः प्रजाः। अनुरक्त इवाशेषगुणेषु गुणवर्जितः।। 22।।

kathamesāṃ bhavenmokṣa iti viṣṇurvicintayan/
kathāṃ prathayituṃ loke sarvalokamalāpahām//
rāmāyaṇābhidhāṃ rāmo bhūtvā mānuṣaceṣṭakaḥ/
krodhaṃ mohaṃ ca kāmaṃ ca vyavahārārthasiddhaye//
tattatkālocitaṃ gṛhṇan mohayatyavaśāḥ prajāḥ/
anurakta ivāśeṣaguṇeṣu guṇavarjitaḥ//

Wondering how they can be liberated from it (i.e. from the fetters of ignorance and their consequences), Lord Vishnu—in order to spread his divine story called Ramayan which has the stupendous potential and magnificent prowess to help eliminate all the perversions, perplexities, vices, evils, sins, blemishes, flaws, faults, recklessness, misdemeanors and misdeeds of this world by showing the people a beacon of hope and light, and providing them with an easy means to attain emancipation and salvation —did all the numerous deeds and performed the various activities like an ordinary human being.

For the purpose of achieving success in this effort (and to expertly play the role of a human that the Lord voluntarily decided to assume), he had to accept all the different blemishes or faults that are the usual norm with a human being. Some of these shortcomings that the Lord exhibited as a human are 'Krodh' (anger, rage, wrathfulness, vengeance, reprisals,), 'Moha' (various delusions arising out of ignorance, leading to worldly attachments, attractions, infatuations as well as illusions, misconceptions and their consequences), and 'Kaam' (various forms of worldly desires, greed, yearnings, lust, passions and indulgences etc.) according to the circumstances and necessities of the occasion.

As a result, he enthralls and keeps the subjects of his creation—

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who are already under the charm of his delusion creating Maya, and enslaved to the different worldly shortcomings, blemishes and faults caused by ignorance kindled and fostered by it—by his seemingly ordinary and humdrum mundane deeds and actions as an ordinary human being, though these deeds and actions are holy and divine in essence. But inspite of outwardly appearing to be possessed of all the characteristics associated with a human, he is beyond them, he is completely free from them, he is above reproach and the free from the snares created by faults, he remains eternally detached from them, indifferent and dispassionate towards them, unblemished and untainted by them! (20-22).

[Note :—Verse nos. 20-22 mean that Sri Ram showed humankind that even he—who is the supreme Lord— has such and such fault or shortcoming which are reflective of the various characteristic features of any ordinary human being. But, at the same time, he also sets an example of exemplary uprightness and righteousness, a stellar instance of immaculate character, mind and heart to serve as a live example for others to follow. In effect, he not only showed our shortcomings as if reflected from a mirror but also showed how to overcome and tackle such situations so as to uphold the highest standard of ethics, morality, politics, social behaviour, personal relationships, probity and propriety. So when it is said that Sri Ram's devotees will benefit by reading, studying, reciting, narrating, explaining and singing the stories pertaining to the worldly deeds he did while staying on this earth as described in the Ramayan, it does not imply only a mechanical reading of any odd history, or praising it for its classical composition, or enjoyment of its melodious music. Rather it implies and entails a sincere imbibing of the subtle message in Sri Ram's life as enshrined and narrated in the Ramayan. The process of singing and chanting of hymns (melodious verses) is used because it is most attractive and captivating medium for a tired creature seeking some succour for his wearied soul, but the real benefit comes by understanding the hidden wealth of knowledge and a treasury of guidance that his life throws open for us to benefit from.]

विज्ञानमूर्तिर्विज्ञानशक्तिः साक्ष्यगुणान्वितः। अतः कामादिभिर्नित्यमविलिप्तो यथा नभः॥ 23॥
विन्दन्ति मुनयः केचिज्जानन्ति जनकादयः। तद्भक्ता निर्मलात्मानः सम्यग् जानन्ति नित्यदा।
भक्तचित्तानुसारेण जायते भगवानजः॥ 24॥

vijñānamūrtirvijñānaśaktiḥ sākṣyaguṇānvitaḥ/
ataḥ kāmādibhirnityamavilipto yathā nabhaḥ//
vindanti munayaḥ kecijjānanti janakādayaḥ/
tadbhaktā nirmalātmānaḥ samyag jānanti nityadā/
bhaktacittānusāreṇa jāyate bhagavānajaḥ//

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He (Sri Ram) is an embodiment of Vigyan (true knowledge that stands the test of truth and wisdom; deep insight into anything; enlightenment accompanied by discrimination); it is his power and strength. He is the only witness to everything (i.e. nothing is concealed from him), and is beyond all attributes. That is why he is not at all involved or engrossed in or attached to, in any manner whatsoever, to any of the different faults blemishes, drawbacks, shortcomings and taints, such as Kaam (lust, greed, desire etc.) that are associated with the mind and heart apparatus even as the sky (space) remains unaffected and untarnished by whatever is present in it or which it surrounds (23) [See Lanka Kand, Canto 14, verse no. 24.].

His actual and truthful nature (form) is properly and truthfully realised only by selected few saints, hermits, sages, seers, saintly kings like Janak and other pure-hearted devotees. That Lord who has no birth manifests himself according to the inclinations, requirements and emotional desires and needs of his devotees (24).

[Note :—(i) The sky or space is the subtlest of the 5 elements—viz. earth, water, fire, wind/air, space/sky. It pervades everywhere but is uncorrupt, unpolluted and faultless in all respects. The blemishes, faults, vices, evils, sins, corruptions and misdemeanors of the world are like suspended dust particles, smoke, moisture, clouds, the numerous other things such as the various birds and the celestial bodies high up in the sky which create an illusion of a sky that is spotted or dotted or polluted or coloured or overcast with these uncountable objects that are extraneous to the sky, that are not integral to it but nevertheless appear to be a part of the sky. The sky has nothing to do with them; it remains absolutely unconcerned with and untainted by them, for once they are removed from the scene the sky is uniform and spotless from one end of the horizon to the other. This example is very practical and can be observed by anyone. That is why 'sky' is used as a metaphor to describe anything that remains free from the influences of those things that appear to be an integral part of it but are in actual fact not related with it by even any remote chance. (ii) Verse nos. 17-24 highlight Sri Ram's true, real nature vis-ë-vis his external behaviour like an ordinary man weeping and lamenting for his lost wife. These verses are included here to remove any doubts and confusions from the mind of the reader as to who Sri Ram actually was while behaving in the way he did. See also Lanka Kand, Canto 14, verse 24.]

लक्ष्मणोऽपि तदा गत्वा किष्किन्धानगरान्तिकम्। ज्याघोषमकरोत्तीव्रं भीषयन् सर्ववानरान्।। 25 ।।
तं दृष्ट्वा प्राकृतास्तत्र वानरा वप्रमूर्धनि। चक्रुः किलकिलाशब्दं धृतपाषाणपादपाः।। 26 ।।
तान्दृष्ट्वा क्रोधताम्राक्षो वानरान् लक्ष्मणस्तदा। निर्मूलान्कर्तुमुद्युक्तो धनुरानम्य वीर्यवान्।। 27 ।।

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lakṣmaṇopi tadā gatvā kiṣkindhānagarāntikam /
jyāghoṣamakarottīvraṃ bhīṣayan sarvavānarān //
taṃ dṛṣṭvā prākṛtāstatra vānarā vapramūrdhani /
cakruḥ kilakilāśabdaṃ dhṛtapāṣāṇapādapāḥ //
tāndṛṣṭvā krodhatāmrākṣo vānarān lakṣmaṇastadā /
nirmūlānkartumudyukto dhanurānamya vīryavān //

Meanwhile at Kishkindha, Laxman came and twanged his bow with such a terrible sound that all the assembled monkeys were petrified with fear (25). Some ordinary monkeys (probably guards or watch-outs) on the ramparts of the fort took up stones and trees in their hands and started making a shrill cry (of war). [They thought that Laxman was an intruder, so prepared themselves for defense and counter attack.] (26).

Seeing them and thinking that they were mocking at him, Laxman's eyes became red and furious with anger, and he prepared himself by stringing the bow and lifting it up to cut-off their heads (27).

ततः शीघ्रं समाप्लुत्य ज्ञात्वा लक्ष्मणमागतम्।। 28 ।।
निवार्य वानरान् सर्वानङ्गदो मन्त्रिसत्तमः। गत्वा लक्ष्मणसामीप्यं प्रणनाम स दण्डवत्।। 29 ।।

tataḥ śīghraṃ samāplutya jñātvā lakṣmaṇamāgatam //
nirvāya vānarān sarvānaṅgado mantrisattamaḥ /
gatvā lakṣmaṇasāmīpyaṃ praṇanāma sa daṇḍavat //

Coming to know that Laxman has come, the senior minister Angad jumped up instantly and stopped all the monkeys (from any aggressive posturing which might make Laxman angry and precipitate a tragedy), came to Laxman and prostrated before him to pay his respects (28-29).

ततोऽङ्गदं परिष्वज्य लक्ष्मणः प्रियवर्धनः। उवाच वत्स गच्छ त्वं पितृव्याय निवेदय।। 30 ।।
मामागतं राघवेण चोदितं रौद्रमूर्तिना। तथेति त्वरितं गत्वा सुग्रीवाय न्यवेदयत्।। 31 ।।

tato'ṅgadaṃ pariṣvajya lakṣmaṇaḥ priyavardhanaḥ /
uvāca vatsa gaccha tvaṃ pitṛvyāya nyavedaya //
māmāgataṃ rāghaveṇa coditaṃ raudramūrtinā /
tatheti tvaritaṃ gatvā sugrīvāya nyavedayat //

Then the most affectionate Laxman embraced Angad and said, 'Oh dear son ('Vatsa')! You go immediately and inform your uncle (Sugriv) that Raghav (Sri Ram) is extremely unhappy and angry with him, and

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I have come here at his instance'. Angad said 'alright' and went and told Sugriv everything (30-31).

लक्ष्मणः क्रोधताम्राक्षः पुरद्वारि बहिःस्थितः। तच्छ्रुत्वातीव सन्त्रस्तः सुग्रीवो वानरेश्वरः।।32।।
आहूय मन्त्रिणां श्रेष्ठं हनूमन्तमथाब्रवीत्। गच्छ त्वमङ्गदेनाशु लक्ष्मणं विनयान्वितः।।33।।
सान्त्वयन्कोपितं वीरं शनैरानय सादरम्। प्रेषयित्वा हनूमन्तं तारामाह कपीश्वरः।।34।।

lakṣmaṇaḥ krodhatāmrākṣaḥ puradvāri bahiḥsthitaḥ /
tacchrutvātīva santrastaḥ sugrīvo vānareśvaraḥ //
āhūya mantriṇāṃ śreṣṭhaṃ hanūmantamathābravīt /
gaccha tvamaṅgadenāśu lakṣmaṇaṃ vinayānvitaḥ //
sāntvayankopitaṃ vīraṃ śanairānaya sādaram /
preṣayitvā hanūmantaṃ tārāmāha kapīśvaraḥ //

He informed him that Laxman is standing outside the gates of the city with red, angry eyes. Sugriv was very frightened on hearing it (32). He summoned Hanuman who was the best amongst his ministers and said, 'You take Angad along and immediately go politely to Laxman (33), and gradually pacify that angry brave gentleman using most polite and humble words of prayer and submission, and then most respectfully bring him here'. Having dispatched Hanuman, Sugriv said to Tara (34)—

त्वं गच्छ सान्त्वयन्ती तं लक्ष्मणं मृदुभाषितैः। शान्तमन्तःपुरं नीत्वा पश्चाद्दर्शय मेऽनघे।।35।।
भवत्विति ततस्तारा मध्यकक्षं समाविशत्। हनूमानङ्गदेनैव सहितो लक्ष्मणान्तिकम्।।36।।
गत्वा ननाम शिरसा भक्त्या स्वागतमब्रवीत्। एहि वीर महाभाग भवद्गृहमशङ्कितम्।।37।।

tvaṃ gaccha sāntvayantī taṃ lakṣmaṇaṃ mṛdubhāṣitaiḥ /
śāntamantaḥpuraṃ nītvā paścāddarśaya me'naghe //
bhavatviti tatastārā madhyakakṣaṃ samāviśat /
hanūmānaṅgadenaiva sahito lakṣmaṇāntikam //
gatvā nanāma śirasā bhaktyā svāgatamabravīt /
ehi vīra mahābhāga bhavadgṛhamaśaṅkitam //

'Oh Anagh (the sinless, pure, uncorrupt, guiltless and faultless one)[1]! You go forward and using your sweet, charming and pleasant words (and demeanours), try to calm down the anger of the brave Laxman, and when he cools down, bring him to my palace and let me meet him here[2]' (35).

Tara said 'alright' and came to the middle (central) gateway.

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Meanwhile, Angad and Hanuman came to Laxman, bowed their heads before him respectfully and welcomed him most reverentially. They said, 'Oh the most fortunate, great and brave one! Come with us without any hesitation—this house (place) is your own (36-37).

[Note—[1]Tara has been addressed with these adjectives to show that inspite of being forced by circumstances to live with Sugriv, she never had any sexual relationship with him. The word 'Anagh' used for her by no one else but Sugriv himself points to her immaculate nature as a chaste woman who is loyal towards her husband. There are seven ladies in mythological lore, including Mandodari, the wife of Ravana, who are considered eternally pure because they never had anything to do with any other male other than her husband.

[2]Sugriv was so terrified of Laxman that he sent Hanuman and Angad to meet him and to make sure that things don't go out of hands while he installed Tara in the central courtyard. He chose Hanuman because the latter was the person who was considered as the wisest amongst the clan and could use his great wisdom and diplomacy to control the situation as demanded. Angad was chosen because he was an orphan and Lord Ram has promised Vaali that he would take good care of him. Tara was selected to man the central gate because Laxman would find difficult to by-pass her to enter the inner part of the palace to kill Sugriv, especially when she was Vaali's widow and was pleading with him. As for him, he must have hidden himself in some secret place to escape Laxman's wrath.]

प्रविश्य राजदारादीन् दृष्ट्वा सुग्रीवमेव च। यदाज्ञापयसे पश्चात्तत्सर्वं करवाणि भोः।। 38।।
इत्युक्त्वा लक्ष्मणं भक्त्या करे गृह्य स मारुतिः। आनयामास नगरमध्याद्राजगृहं प्रति।।39।।

praviśya rājadārādīn dṛṣṭvā sugrīvameva ca/
yadājñāpayase paścāttatsarvaṃ karavāṇi bhoḥ//
ityuktvā lakṣmaṇaṃ bhaktyā kare gṛhya sa mārutiḥ/
ānayāmāsa nagaramadhyādrājagṛhaṃ prati//

Meet the royal queens and Sugriv. Then we shall do as you command (wish)' (38). Saying this, Hanuman escorted Laxman most respectfully by holding his hands (to show that he was most welcome). They passed through the centre of the city towards the royal palace (of Sugriv) (39).

पश्यंस्तत्र महासौधान् यूथपानां समन्ततः। जगाम भवनं राज्ञः सुरेन्द्रभवनोपमम्।। 40।।
मध्यकक्षे गता तत्र तारा ताराधिपानना। सर्वाभरणसम्पन्ना मदरक्तान्तलोचना।। 41।।

paśyaṃstatra mahāsaudhān yūthapānāṃ samantataḥ/
jagāma bhavanaṃ rājñaḥ surendrabhavanopamam//

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madhyakakṣe gatā tatra tārā tārādhipānanā /
sarvābharaṇasampannā madaraktāntalocanā //

Glancing around casually at the houses and mansions of various monkey chieftains on the way, Laxman arrived at the royal palace which was most majestic and grand like the abode of Indra (40). There, at the central gate, the moon-like Tara was sitting (waiting for them). She was fully decorated with ornaments and her eyes were slightly red (pink or purple) with delight and intoxicated with pride of her beauty (41).

[Note :—Tara was delighted because out of all the women in Sugriv's household, it was she who was chosen by him to see Laxman—she felt most fortunate and privileged that she would now get a rare opportunity to talk with Laxman. She was proud of her beauty, and despite the fact that this wasn't the occasion to flaunt it, she could not conceal her pride like any other woman is of her beauty. The point to note is that this very lady was so distraught that she had wanted to end her life along with her husband Vaali, and has now all but forgotten that she has been widowed. All her talk of renunciation and dying with Vaali in Canto 3, verse nos. 5-11 have gone to the wind. Off-course, Sugriv had kept her as his mistress, but notwithstanding that, she bedecking herself in all the finery shows that she had no remorse or a sense of guilt in facing the person who has had been instrumental in her husband's death. This is a stellar example of how the Lord's Maya spins the head of all. Further, by stationing herself at the central gate, she had tried to assuage Laxman's ruffled temper, reminding him the promises they (Sri Ram and Laxman) had made to Sugriv to protect him, as well as reminding him that she was the mother of Angad, who was also their protected one. It was also a gesture that he was most welcome and an honoured guest, and he should pacify himself before meeting Sugriv.]

उवाच लक्ष्मणं नत्वा स्मितपूर्वाभिभाषिणी। एहि देवर भ्रदं ते साधुस्त्वं भक्तवत्सलः ।। 42 ।।
किमर्थं कोपमाकार्षीर्भक्ते भृत्ये कपीश्वरे। बहुकालमनाश्वासं दुःखमेवानुभूतवान् ।। 43 ।।

uvāca lakṣmaṇaṃ natvā smitapūrvābhibhāṣiṇī /
ehi devara bhadraṃ te sādhustvaṃ bhaktavatsalaḥ //
kimarthaṃ kopamākārṣīrbhakte bhṛtye kapīśvare /
bahukālamanāśvāsaṃ duḥkhamevānubhūtavān //

That sweet-voiced Tara smiled and said charmingly to Laxman, 'Come brother-in-law[1]! Welfare and greetings to you! Bless you! You are very saintly and pious as well as benign and munificent towards your devotees (42). Why have you become so angry and wrathful on

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your devotee and subordinate king of monkeys (Sugriv)? He has already suffered a lot for a very long time without any solace or succour (after being ousted by Vaali) (43).

[Note :—The use of address 'brother-in-law' for Laxman. By the use of this single relationship establishing phrase, Tara pre-empted any chance of Laxman showing any disregard to her and superseding her advice.]

इदानीं बहुदुःखौघाद्भवद्भिरभिरक्षितः। भवत्प्रसादात्सुग्रीवः प्राप्तसौख्यो महामतिः।। 44।।
कामासक्तो रघुपतेः सेवार्थं नागतो हरिः। आगमिष्यन्ति हरयो नानादेशगताः प्रभो।। 45।।

idānīṃ bahuduḥkhaughādbhavadbhirabhirakṣitaḥ /
bhavatprasādātsugrīvaḥ prāptasaukhyo mahāmatiḥ //
kāmāsakto raghupateḥ sevārthaṃ nāgato hariḥ /
āgamiṣyanti harayo nānādeśagatāḥ prabho //

You have extricated and protected him yourself from that formidable torment and grief from which he was suffering interminably. It is because of your grace and kindness that he has at last come to see this peace and comfort (44). By birth he is a monkey, so he became engrossed in lust and gratification of sense organs and is involved in sensual pleasures. He did not present himself before the Lord Hari (Sri Ram). Oh Lord! Now numerous monkeys are arriving shortly from different countries (to accomplish your work) (45).

प्रेषितो दशसाहस्त्रा हरयो रघुसत्तम। आनेतुं वानरान् दिग्भ्यो महापर्वतसन्निभान्।। 46।।
सुग्रीवः स्वयमागत्य सर्ववानरयूथपैः। बधयिष्यति दैत्यौघान् रावणं च हनिष्यति।। 47।।

preṣito daśasāhasrā harayo raghusattama /
ānetuṃ vānarān digbhyo mahāparvatasannibhān //
sugrīvaḥ svayamāgatya sarvavānarayūthapaiḥ /
vadhayiṣyati daityaughān rāvaṇaṃ ca haniṣyati //

Oh the most exalted in king Raghu's clan (Laxman)! ten thousand monkeys have been dispatched as messengers to summon countless monkeys who are colossus like huge mountains from all the 10 directions (i.e. from all the corners of the world) (46). Sugriv will go himself along with those monkey chieftains and get the hordes of demons slayed, and shall kill Ravana himself (47).

त्वयैव सहितोऽद्यैव गन्ता वानरपुङ्गवः। पश्यान्तर्भवनं तत्र पुत्रदारसुहृद्वृतम्।। 48।।
दृष्ट्वा सुग्रीवमभयं दत्त्वा नय सहैव ते। तारायाः वचनं श्रुत्वा कृशक्रोधोऽथ लक्ष्मणः।। 49।।

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जगामान्तःपुरं यत्र सुग्रीवो वानरेश्वरः। रुमामालिङ्ग्य सुग्रीवः पर्यङ्के पर्यवस्थितः।। 50।।

tvayaiva sahito'dyaiva gantā vānarapuṅgavaḥ/
paśyāntarbhavanaṃ tatra putradārasuhṛdvṛtam//
dṛṣṭvā sugrīvamabhayaṃ dattvā naya sahaiva te/
tārāyā vacanaṃ śrutvā kṛśakrodho'tha lakṣmaṇaḥ//
jagāmāntaḥpuraṃ yatra sugrīvo vānareśvaraḥ/
rumāmāliṅgya sugrīvaḥ paryaṅke paryavasthitaḥ//

The best amongst monkeys (i.e. Sugriv) shall present himself along with you in the service of the Lord soon today. Come, come inside the royal palace. Sugriv is sitting there accompanied by his wife, son and companions (48). Meet him and bless him with fearlessness for he is already terrified. Then take him with you to Sri Ram'.

Hearing the soothing and pacifying words of Tara, Laxman's anger abetted and he calmed down (49). He went to the palace where Sugriv was lying on the bed in the tight embrace of his wife Ruma[1] (50).

[Note :—[1]What a fascinating and absurd scene indeed! It seems ridiculous and incredible that in the face of danger of Laxman's anger and wrath, Sugriv should behave like this—lying on bed with his wife in tight embrace! But anyone who has monitored the behaviour of monkeys closely will observe that when a male finds a female in proximity and he faces any danger or is under mental tension, he either runs away, or attacks the intruder, or starts copulating. It is their natural biological response to overcome tension and stress. Since the first two options were closed for Sugriv, he did what he was doing. Further, it may have been a pre-planned strategy on his part to justify his negligence in doing Sri Ram's work—that he was naturally very lascivious by nature and full of libido. Again, the scene would create a hilarious situation and would make Laxman burst out laughing at the absurdity of it instead of showing anger. Very clever ploy on the part of Sugriv indeed! The reader should just close his eyes and imagine the incredulous scene. He will realise the funny aspect of it.

Another plausible reason is that it is considered a heinous crime and serious sin to kill a person while he is copulating. So Sugriv thought that when Laxman finds him in this state, he will not shoot him during the act. This will give Sugriv some precious minutes to plan his next course of action.]

दृष्ट्वा लक्ष्मणमत्यर्थमुत्पपातातिभीतवत्। तं दृष्ट्वा लक्ष्मणः क्रुद्धो मदविह्वलितेक्षणम्।। 51।।
सुग्रीवं प्राह दुर्वृत्त विस्मृतोऽसि रघूत्तमम्। वाली येन हतो वीरः स बाणोऽद्य प्रतीक्षते।।52।।

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dṛṣṭvā lakṣmaṇamatyarthamutpapātātibhītavat /
taṃ dṛṣṭvā lakṣmaṇaḥ kruddho madavihvalitekṣaṇam //
sugrīvaṃ prāha durvṛtta vismṛto'si raghuttamam /
vālī yena hato vīraḥ sa bāṇo'dya pratīkṣate //

As soon as he saw Laxman, he jumped up as if he was very frightened and startled. His eyes were red and purple with intoxication (because he had been drinking liberally). Seeing him in this condition, Laxman became angry and said vehemently, 'Oh you characterless fellow! Have you forgotten the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)? Don't you know that the arrow which had killed the brave Vaali is waiting for you? (51-52)

त्वमेव वालिनो मार्गं गमिष्यसि मया हतः। एवमत्यन्तपरुषं वदन्तं लक्ष्मणं तदा।। 53।।
उवाच हनुमान् वीरः कथमेवं प्रभाषसे। त्वत्तोऽधिकतरो रामे भक्तोऽयं वानराधिपः।। 54।।

tvameva vālino mārgaṃ gamiṣyasi mayā hataḥ /
evamatyantaparuṣaṃ vadantaṃ lakṣmaṇaṃ tadā //
uvāca hanumān vīraḥ kathamevaṃ prabhāṣase /
tvatto'dhikataro rāme bhakto'yaṃ vānarādhipaḥ //

It appears that you wish to die at my hands and follow the path of Vaali'. Seeing Laxman use such tough and harsh words, the brave Hanuman intervened, saying, 'Why do you say such things? This monkey king is a far greater devotee of Sri Ram than you are (53-54).

रामकार्यार्थमनिशं जागर्ति न तु विस्मृतः। आगताः परितः पश्य वानराः कोटिशः प्रभो।। 55।।
गमिष्यन्त्यचिरेणैव सीतायाः परिमार्गणम्। साधयिष्यति सुग्रीवो रामकार्यमशेषतः।। 56।।

rāmakāryārthamaniśaṃ jāgarti na tu vismṛtaḥ /
āgatāḥ paritaḥ paśya vānarāḥ koṭiśaḥ prabho //
gamiṣyantyacireṇaiva sītāyāḥ parimārgaṇam /
sādhayiṣyati sugrīvo rāmakāryamaśeṣataḥ //

He keeps awake day and night thinking of ways for doing Sri Ram's work (i.e. he is very vigilant and alert towards his responsibility, is very eager to do it, and has not neglected it). Be assured, he has not forgotten it. Oh Lord! Look, these millions of monkeys are coming from all the directions for this very purpose (55). They will soon embark in the search of Sita, and Sugriv shall fulfill (complete) successfully the vows he has made to Sri Ram' (56).

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श्रुत्वा हनुमतो वाक्यं सौमित्रिर्लज्जितोऽभवत्। सुग्रीवोऽप्यर्घ्यपाद्याद्यैर्लक्ष्मणं समपूजयत्।। 57।।
आलिङ्ग्य प्राह रामस्य दासोऽहं तेन रक्षितः। रामः स्वतेजसा लोकान् क्षणार्द्धेनैव जेष्यति।।58।।

śrutvā hanumato vākyaṃ saumitrirlajjito'bhavat/
sugrīvo'pyarghyapādyādyairlakṣmaṇaṃ samapūjayat//
āliṅgya prāha rāmasya dāso'haṃ tena rakṣitaḥ/
rāmaḥ svatejasā lokān kṣaṇārddhenaiva jeṣyati//

Hearing these words of Hanuman, Laxman felt ashamed at himself (i.e. at his anger). Then Sugriv properly (duly) worshipped and welcomed him by washing his feet with water and offering oblations to him (57). He then embraced Laxman affectionately and said, 'Sir, I am but a humble servant of Sri Ram. He has protected me. He can conquer the whole world in half a second by his brilliant and invincible energy and stupendous powers (58).

सहायमात्रमेवाहं वानरैः सहितः प्रभो। सौमित्रिरपि सुग्रीवं प्राह किञ्चिन्मयोदितम्।। 59।।
तत्क्षमस्व महाभाग प्रणयाद्भाषितं मया। गच्छमोऽद्यैव सुग्रीव रामस्तिष्ठति कानने।।60।।
एक एवातिदुःखार्त्तो जानकीविरहात्प्रभुः। तथेति रथमारुह्य लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः।।61।।
वानरैः सहितो राजा राममेवान्वपद्यत।।62।।

sahāyamātramevāhaṃ vānaraiḥ sahitaḥ prabho/
saumitrirapi sugrīvaṃ prāha kiñcinmayoditam//
tatkṣamasva mahābhāga praṇayādbhāṣitaṃ mayā/
gacchāmo'dyaiva sugrīva rāmastiṣṭhati kānane//
eka evātiduḥkhārtto jānakīvirahātprabhuḥ/
tatheti rathamāruhya lakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ//
vānaraiḥ sahito rājā rāmamevānvapadyata//

Oh Lord! I will be of a mere token help to him with my monkey army (i.e. he is able to do everything, what can I do for him!)'. Then the son of Sumitra (Laxman) replied to Sugriv, 'Whatever I have told you were said jokingly and in the so-called affectionate anger (i.e. I did not actually mean what I said; I did not sincerely want to wreck vengeance on you; it was merely to shake you up from your slumber and warn you not to allow yourself in indulgences, and become alert and active) (59). Oh the fortunate one! You must forgive me for my harsh words. Sri Ram is alone in the forest, and he is very agitated and anguished due to Sita's separation. Hence, we will go to him today itself (i.e. don't ask me to spend the night in the city. We can't afford

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to leave Sri Ram alone in the forest for the night)'. Saying 'alright', Sugriv, along with Laxman, mounted a chariot (60-61). Accompanied by other monkeys, they went off to meet Sri Ram (62).

भेरीमृदङ्गैर्बहुऋक्षवानरैः श्वेतातपत्रैर्व्यजनैश्च शोभितः।
नीलाङ्गदाद्यैर्हनुमत्प्रधानैः समावृतो राघवमभ्यगाद्धरिः।।63।।

bherīmṛdaṅgairbahuṛkṣavānaraiḥ śvetātapatrairvyajanaiśca śobhitaḥ /
nīlāṅgadādyairhanumatpradhānaiḥ samāvṛto rāghavamabhyagāddhariḥ //

At that time, they looked magnificent on the chariot. Many musical instruments such as kettledrums, tumbrels etc. were played, while many bears and monkeys holding white ceremonial umbrellas and whisks for them (Laxman and Sugriv) made them look most majestic, regal and magnificently grand. In this manner, the king of monkeys (Sugriv), accompanied by Neel, Angad, Hanuman and other of the chief monkeys, departed with great pomp and pageantry to meet Sri Ram (63).

[Note :—They were no ordinary monkeys as we usually think. They had a city, palaces, musical instruments, chariots, jewelry, and could speak the human tongue, especially Sanskrit, which was the language of the learned, as is very clear by the foregoing narration here. In my personal opinion, they were characterised as being monkeys by the North Indian Aryans as a derogatory epithet because of their physical characteristics, temperaments, behaviours and mental inclinations. They might have been a little lower in the rung of evolutionary ladder, but certainly no stupid monkeys as the term generally implies, the weren't animals as such, because no monkey has a palace, a chariot, jewelry, musical instruments, and neither can they speak the human tongue so fluently.]

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Kishkindha Kand — Canto 6

Search for Sita begins; The story of Swyamprabha; Description of the monkey army

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

दृष्ट्वा रामं समासीनं गुहाद्वारि शिलातले। चैलाजिनधरं श्यामं जटामौलिविराजितम्।। 1।।
विशालनयनं शान्तं स्मितचारुमुखाम्बुजम्। सीताविरहसन्तप्तं पश्यन्तं मृगपक्षिणः।। 2।।
रथाद्दूरात्समुत्पत्य वेगात्सुग्रीवलक्ष्मणौ। रामस्य पादयोरग्रे पेततुर्भक्तिसंयुतौ।। 3।।

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śrīmahādeva uvāca

dṛṣṭvā rāmaṃ samāsīnaṃ guhādvāri śilātale /
cailājinadharaṃ śyāmaṃ jaṭāmaulivirājitam //
viśālanayanaṃ śāntaṃ smitacārumukhāmbujam /
sītāvirahasantaptaṃ paśyantaṃ mṛgapakṣiṇaḥ //
rathāddūrātsamutpatya vegātsugrīvalakṣmaṇau /
rāmasya pādayoragre petaturbhaktisaṃyutau //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! They saw Sri Ram sitting on a boulder on the mouth of the cave. He was wearing a deer skin, was dark complexioned, had a crown of matted hairs (1), had large eyes, was calm, tranquil and serene, and had a pleasant, attractive and charming smile on his face. He was overwhelmed by the torments created due to the agony of separation from Sita, and was looking blankly, as if in a daze and lost in thoughts, at the deer and birds around him (2).

Sugriv and Laxman got down from the chariot a little far away, and came and fell down at his feet with devotion and reverence (3).

रामः सुग्रीवमालिङ्ग्य पृष्ट्वानामयमन्तिके। स्थापयित्वा यथान्यायं पूजयामास धर्मवित्।।4।।
ततोऽब्रवीद्रघुश्रेष्ठं सुग्रीवो भक्तिनम्रधीः। देव पश्य समायान्तीं वानराणां महाचमूम्।।5।।

rāmaḥ sugrīvamāliṅgya pṛṣṭvānāmayamantike /
sthāpayitvā yathānyāyaṃ pūjayāmāsa dharmavit //
tato'bravīdraghuśreṣṭhaṃ sugrīvo bhaktinamradhīḥ /
deva paśya samāyāntīṃ vānarāṇāṃ mahācamūm //

Sri Ram—who is an expert in the laws of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety and noble conduct) embraced Sugriv and asked about his welfare. He seated him near and duly honoured him (4).

Then Sugriv said to the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) most reverentially, 'Oh Lord! Look, this huge army of monkeys has started arriving (5).

कुलाचलाद्रिसम्भूता मेरुमन्दरसन्निभाः। नानाद्वीपसरिच्छैलवासिनः पर्वतोपमाः।।6।।
असंख्याताः समायान्ति हरयः कामरूपिणः। सर्वे देवांशसम्भूताः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः।।7।।

kulācalādrisambhūtā merumandarasannibhāḥ /
nānādvīpasaricchailavāsinaḥ parvatopamāḥ //
asaṅkhyātāḥ samāyānti harayaḥ kāmarūpiṇaḥ /
sarve devāṃśasambhūtāḥ sarve yuddhaviśāradāḥ //

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These monkeys were born on the Himalayas and other great mountains, have bodies as colossus as the Sumeru and Mandrachal mountains, live in different continents, along river banks and on mountain tops, and are as huge and enormous as mountains themselves (6). All of them have been born out of the sperms of Gods. They can assume any form they like and are very expert in the art of warfare (7).

अत्र केचिद्गजबलाः केचिद्दशगजोपमाः। गजायुतबलाः केचिदन्येऽमितबलाः प्रभो।। 8।।
केचिदञ्जनकूटाभाः केचित्कनकसन्निभाः। केचिद्रक्तान्तवदना दीर्घवालास्तथापरे।।9।।
शुद्धस्फटिकसङ्काशाः केचिद्राक्षससन्निभाः। गर्जन्तः परितो यान्ति वानरा युद्धकांक्षिणः।।10।।

atra kecidgajabalāḥ keciddaśagajopamāḥ/
gajāyutabalāḥ kecitanye'mitabalāḥ prabho//
kecidañjanakūṭābhāḥ kecitkanakasannibhāḥ/
kecidraktāntavadanā dīrghavālāstathāpare//
śuddhasphaṭikasaṅkāśāḥ kecitrākṣasasannibhāḥ/
garjantaḥ parito yānti vānarā yuddhakāṅkṣiṇaḥ//

Oh Lord! Out of them, some have the strength of one, some of ten and some of ten thousand elephants, while there is no criterion or measurement of the strength of others (8). Look, some are black (i.e. dark complexioned) like the Kajjal Giri(the black mountain of solidified soot), some are fair complexioned like gold, some have red faces like the colour of blood while some have long hairs on their bodies (9). Some look clean like pure crystal while others look terrible and frightening like demons. All of these monkeys are very eager for battle; that is why they are running hither and thither, hopping, skipping and jumping, and raring to go, roaring fearlessly and fiercely all the while (10).

त्वदाज्ञाकारिणः सर्वे फलमूलाशनाः प्रभो। ऋक्षाणामधिपो वीरो जाम्बवान्नाम बुद्धिमान्।। 11।।
एष मे मन्त्रिणां श्रेष्ठः कोटिभल्लूकवृन्दपः। हनूमानेष विख्यातो महासत्त्वपराक्रमः।।12।।

tvadājñākāriṇaḥ sarve phalamūlāśanāḥ prabho/
ṛkṣāṇāmadhipo vīro jāmbavānnāma buddhimān//
eṣa me mantriṇāṃ śreṣṭha koṭibhallūkavṛndapaḥ/
hanūmāneṣa vikhyāto mahāsattvaparākramaḥ//

Oh Lord! They will all obey you and they will survive by eating only fruits and roots etc. (i.e. you will not have to worry about logistics and ration for this huge army).

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[Now, Sugriv introduces the chief commanders of the army to Sri Ram—] This king of bears, Jamvant, is very brave, courageous, wise and intelligent (11). He is the Lord (commander) of ten million bears and is foremost among my ministers. Next, this is Hanuman, the son of the Wind God, who is famous for his great strength and valour, and is most glorious, brilliant and radiant (12).

वायुपुत्रोऽतितेजस्वी मन्त्री बुद्धिमतां वरः। नलो नीलश्च गवयो गवाक्षो गन्धमादनः॥ 13॥
शरभो मैन्दवश्चैव गजः पनस एव च। वलीमुखो दधिमुखः सुषेणस्तार एव च॥ 14॥
केसरी च महासत्त्वः पिता हनुमतो बली। एते ते यूथपा राम प्राधान्येन मयोदिताः॥ 15॥

vāyuputro'titejasvī mantrī buddhimatāṃ varaḥ/
nalo nīlaśca gavayo gavākṣo gandhamādanaḥ//
śarabho maindavaścaiva gajaḥ panasa eva ca/
valimukho dadhimukhaḥ suṣeṇāstāra eva ca//
kesarī ca mahāsattvaḥ pitā hanumato balī/
ete te yūthapā rāma prādhānyena mayoditāḥ//

He is foremost amongst the wise ones and is my chief (most senior) minister. Besides these two, my other army chief commanders are as follows—Nal, Neel, Gawai, Gawaksha, Gandhamadan, Sharav, Maindav, Gaj, Panas, Vaalimukh, Dadhimukh, Sushen, Taar and the father of Hanuman, the most valorous, valiant and great warrior, the most famous, steadfast and agile Keshari (13-15).

महात्मानो महावीर्याः शक्रतुल्यपराक्रमाः। एते प्रत्येकतः कोटिकोटिवानरयूथपाः॥ 16॥
तवाज्ञाकारिणः सर्वे सर्वे देवांशसम्भवाः। एष वालिसुतः श्रीमानङ्गदो नाम विश्रुतः॥ 17॥

mahātmāno mahāvīryāḥ śakratulyaparākramāḥ/
ete pratyekataḥ koṭikoṭivānarayūthapāḥ//
tavājñākāriṇaḥ sarve sarve devāṃśasambhavāḥ/
eṣa vālisutaḥ śrīmānaṅgado nāma viśrutaḥ//

All of them are noble and great souls, and are as strong, powerful, valorous, valiant and mighty as Indra (the king of Gods). Each of them is the Lord (commander) of millions of monkeys (i.e. each has millions of monkeys under his orders) (16). All of them are obedient to you and have been born out of the miniscule fraction (or sperms) of Gods. This is Vaali's son, the most famous Angad (17).

[Note—Brahma, the creator, had asked the Gods to take birth on the earth in order to serve the Lord when he arrives here in Baal Kand, canto 2,

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verse no.29-30, and they had followed his instructions as asserted in verse no. 31-32.]

वालितुल्यबलो वीरो राक्षसानां बलान्तकः। एते चान्ये च बहवस्त्वदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः।। 18।।
योद्धारः पर्वताग्रैश्च निपुणाः शत्रुघातने। आज्ञापय रघुश्रेष्ठ सर्वे ते वशवर्तिनः।।19।।

vālitulyabalo vīro rākṣasānāṃ balāntakaḥ /
ete cānye ca bahavastvadarthe tyaktajīvitāḥ //
yoddhāraḥ parvatāgraiśca nipuṇāḥ śatrughātane /
ājñāpaya raghuśreṣṭha sarve te vaśavartinaḥ //

He is also as strong as Vaali and is capable of crushing the demon hordes. In this manner these monkeys, as well as many others, are only too eager to lay down their lives for you (18). They fight with large rocks uprooted from mountains, and they are all very expert in crushing and destroying the enemy. Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! All of them are under your control (command). Order them as you deem fit' (19).

[Note :—Verse nos. 6-19 describes the monkey army in brief.]

रामः सुग्रीवमालिङ्ग्य हर्षपूर्णाश्रुलोचनः। प्राह सुग्रीव जानासि सर्वं त्वं कार्यगौरवम्।। 20।।
मार्गणार्थं हि जानक्या नियुङ्क्ष्व यदि रोचते। श्रुत्वा रामस्य वचनं सुग्रीवः प्रीतमानसः।।21।।
प्रेषयामास बलिनो वानरान् वानरर्षभः। दिक्षु सर्वासु विविधान्वानरान् प्रेष्य सत्वरम्।।22।।
दक्षिणां दिशमत्यर्थं प्रयत्नेन महाबलम्। युवराजं जाम्बवन्तं हनूमन्तं महाबलम्।। 23।।
नलं सुषेणं शरभं मैन्दं द्विविदमेव च। प्रेषयामास सुग्रीवो वचनं चेदमब्रवीत्।। 24।।

rāmaḥ sugrīvamāliṅgya harṣapūrṇāśrulocanaḥ /
prāha sugrīva jānāsi sarvaṃ tvaṃ kāryagauravam //
mārgaṇārthaṃ hi jānakyā niyuṅkṣva yadi rocate /
śrutvā rāmasya vacanaṃ sugrīvaḥ prītamānasaḥ //
preṣayāmāsa balino vānarān vānararṣabhaḥ /
dikṣu sarvāsu vividhānvānarān preṣya satvaram //
dakṣiṇāṃ diśamatyarthaṃ prayatnena mahābalān /
yuvarājaṃ jāmbavantaṃ hanūmantaṃ mahābalam //
nalaṃ suṣeṇaṃ śarabhaṃ maindaṃ dvividameva ca /
preṣayāmāsa sugrīvo vacanaṃ cetamabravīt //

Then Sri Ram's eyes were filled with tears of joy and delight, and he embraced Sugriv affectionately. He said, 'Oh Sugriv! You are aware of the difficulty of my task (20). If you think proper, you must appoint them (i.e. assign them) the task of searching out Sita according to their ability and aptitude'.

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Hearing these words of advise from Sri Ram, the most delighted and pleased Sugriv (21) gladly sent many monkeys in search of Sita. Having sent other monkeys in the various directions (22), he most carefully (after deep thought and consideration) selected the most valorous and valiant prince Angad, Jamavant, Hanuman, Nal, Sushen, Sharav, Maind and Dwividh etc. and sent them towards the south. He said to them (23-24)—

विचिन्वन्तु प्रयत्नेन भवन्तो जानकीं शुभाम्। मासादर्वाङ्निवर्तध्वं मच्छासनपुरःसराः।। 25।।
सीतामदृष्ट्वा यदि वो मासादूर्ध्वं दिनं भवेत्। तदा प्राणान्तिकं दण्डं मत्तः प्राप्स्यथ वानराः।।26।।

vicinvantu prayatnena bhavanto jānakīṃ śubhām /
māsādarvāṅnivartadhvaṃ macchāsanapuraḥsarāḥ //
sītāmadṛṣṭvā yadi vo māsādūrdhvaṃ dinaṃ bhavet /
tadā prāṇāntikaṃ daṇḍaṃ mattaḥ prāpsyatha vānarāḥ //

'By my orders, all of you must diligently (industriously and sincerely) make all possible efforts to search out the most auspicious and virtuous Janki (Sita) and return within one month (25). If you return after one month without having found (seen) her, then oh monkeys, you shall suffer capital punishment at my hands (i.e. I shall kill you all)' (26).

[Note—It seems odd that Sugriv should threaten them with death if they fail in their mission, which was fraught with uncertainty and grave danger from the very beginning. He did not meant to actually kill them, but used as a standard ploy to ensure that they do not lose track of the work and spend their time wandering aimlessly in the forest and coming back to falsely claim that they couldn't find Sita. Soldiers in earlier times were made to follow commands under threat because all weren't too happy to go to battle when the situation demanded, though they had grown fat on the funds of the king who had liberally fed them precisely for this moment. If leniency was shown to one, there were fat chances that the whole army did not fight with the vigour required to win battles.]

इति प्रस्थाप्य सुग्रीवो वानरान् भीमविक्रमान्। रामस्य पार्श्वे श्रीरामं नत्वा चोपविवेश सः।। 27।।
गच्छन्तं मारुतिं दृष्ट्वा रामो वचनमब्रवीत्। अभिज्ञानार्थमेतन्मे ह्यङ्गुलीयकमुत्तमम्।। 28।।
मन्त्रामाक्षरसंयुक्तं सीतायै दीयतां रहः। अस्मिन् कार्ये प्रमाणं हि त्वमेव कपिसत्तम।
जानामि सत्त्वं ते सर्वं गच्छ पन्थाः शुभस्तव।। 29।।

iti prasthāpya sugrīvo vānarān bhīmavikramān /
rāmasya pārśve śrīrāmaṃ natvā copaviveśa saḥ //

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gacchantaṃ mārutiṃ dṛṣṭvā rāmo vacanamabravīt /
abhijñānārthametanme hyaṅgulīyakamuttamam //
mannāmākṣarasaṃyuktaṃ sītāyai dīyatāṃ rahaḥ /
asmin kārye pramāṇaṃ hi tvameva kapisattama /
jānāmi sattvaṃ te sarvaṃ gaccha panthāḥ śubhastava //

Having thus dispatched those most strong, valiant and valorous monkeys on their mission, Sugriv came and bowed before Sri Ram. He sat down near him (27).

At that moment, seeing the son of the Wind God, Hanuman, going on his mission, Sri Ram called him aside and said, 'Take my finger ring, which has my initials (i.e. letters of my name) engraved in it, with you. You should give this to Sita when she is alone as a means of your identification. Oh the best among monkeys! You are the only one who is capable of and competent in doing this difficult task. I know your strength and intelligence. Alright, proceed ahead on your path now. Be blessed and have good luck' (28-29).

एवं कपीनां राज्ञा ते विसृष्टाः परिमार्गणे। सीताया अङ्गदमुखा बभ्रमुस्तत्र तत्र ह।। 30।।
भ्रमन्तो विन्ध्यगहने ददृशुः पर्वतोपमम्। राक्षसं भीषणाकारं भक्षयन्तं मृगान् गजान्।।31।।
रावणोऽयमिति ज्ञात्वा केचिद्वानरपुङ्गवाः। जघ्नुः किलकिलाशब्दं मुञ्चन्तो मुष्टिभिः क्षणात्।।32।।
नायं रावण इत्युक्त्वा ययुरन्यन्महद्वनम्। तृषार्ताः सलिलं तत्र नाविन्दन् हरिपुङ्गवाः।।33।।

evaṃ kapīnāṃ rājñā te visṛṣṭāḥ parimārgaṇe /
sītāyā aṅgadamukhā babhramustatra tatra ha //
bhramanto vindhyagahane dadṛśuḥ parvatopamam /
rākṣasaṃ bhīṣaṇākāraṃ bhakṣayantaṃ mṛgān gajān //
rāvaṇo'yamiti jñātvā kecidvānarapuṅgavāḥ /
jaghnu kilakilāśabdaṃ muñcato muṣṭibhiḥ kṣaṇāt //
nāyaṃ rāvaṇa ityuktvā yayuranyanmahadvanam /
tṛṣārtā salilaṃ tatra nāvindan haripuṅgavāḥ //

In this manner, Angad and other monkeys were dispatched by the king of monkeys with his clear mandate. They began to roam about on this earth in search of Sita (30). While wandering, they came to a dense forest of the Vindhyachal mountain. There they saw a mountain-like formidable demon who was catching hold of deer and elephants of the forest and eating them up (31).

Some monkeys mistakenly thought that he was Ravana, so they chuckled loudly and excitedly and punched him to death in a fraction

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of a moment (32). Then they realised that he cannot be Ravana because of the ease with which he could be killed. So they went to another dense forest in search of Sita. There they felt very thirsty, but water was not visible anywhere (33).

विभ्रमन्तो महारण्ये शुष्ककण्ठोष्ठतालुकाः। ददृशुर्गह्वरं तत्र तृणगुल्मावृतं महत्।। 34।।
आर्द्रपक्षान् क्रौञ्चहंसान्निःसृतान्ददृशुस्ततः। अत्रास्ते सलिलं नूनं प्रविशामो महागुहाम्।।35।।
इत्युक्त्वा हनुमानग्रे प्रविवेश तमन्वयुः। सर्वे परस्परं धृत्वा बाहून्बाहूभिरुत्सुकाः।।36।।

vibhramanto mahāraṇye śuṣkakaṇṭhoṣṭhatālukāḥ /
dadṛśurgahvaraṃ tatra tṛṇagulmāvṛtaṃ mahat //
ārdrapakṣān krauñcahaṃsānniḥsṛtāndadṛśustataḥ /
atrāste salilaṃ nūnaṃ praviśāmo mahāguhām //
ityuktvā hanumānagre praviveśa tamanvayuḥ /
sarve parasparaṃ dhṛtvā bāhūnbāhubhirutsukāḥ //

Roaming around thirsty in that un-inhabitable and dense forest, their throat, lips and palate became parched. Then they saw a large cave covered by grass and creepers (34). They saw herons and swans coming out of its mouth with wet wings. Guessing that the cave must have a water body, they all decided to enter it in search of water. Hanuman went in first, and behind him all the monkeys followed arm-in-arm, very eagerly but scared to enter an unknown and labyrinthine cave (35-36).

[Note :—The cave must have been dark. They went in arm-in-arm so that they aren't lost in the pitch darkness of the labyrinthine cave or to face jointly God knows what was inside it.]

अन्धकारे महद्दूरं गत्वापश्यन् कपीश्वराः। जलाशयान्मणिनिभतोयान् कल्पद्रुमोपमान्।। 37।।
वृक्षान्पक्वफलैर्नम्रान्मधुद्रोणसमन्वितान्। गृहान् सर्वगुणोपेतान् मणिवस्त्रादिपूरितान्।।38।।
दिव्यभक्ष्यान्नसहितान्मानुषैः परिवर्जितान्। विस्मितास्तत्र भवने दिव्ये कनकविष्टरे।। 39।।
प्रभया दीप्यमानां तु ददृशुः स्त्रियमेककाम्। ध्यायन्तीं चीरवसनां योगिनीं योगमास्थिताम्।।40।।

andhakāre mahaddūraṃ gatvāpaśyan kapīśvarāḥ /
jalāśayānmaṇinibhatoyān kalpadrumopamān //
vṛkṣānpakvaphalairnamrānmadhudroṇasamanvitān /
gṛhān sarvaguṇopetān maṇivastrādipūritān //
divyabhakṣyānnasahitānmānuṣaiḥ parivarjitān /
vismitāstatra bhavane divye kanakaviṣṭare //
prabhayā dīpyamānāṃ tu dadṛśuḥ striyamekakām /
dhyāyantīṃ cīravasanāṃ yoginīṃ yogamāsthitām //

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After proceeding far in pitch darkness, the monkeys found a pond with water as clean and pure as crystal. There were Kalpa tree-like trees laden with fruits near it, and they had honeycombs hanging from them. Nearby was a dwelling (hermitage) richly provided with magnificent clothes and precious gem-studded ornaments besides a wide variety of delectable eatables amongst other things of comfort and pleasure. It had all the auspicious signs, but was completely desolate. They were utterly astonished and stunned to see a beautiful lady with divine radiance sitting alone on a golden throne in one of the rooms of the dwelling. That lady was a Yogini (a female ascetic) sitting in deep meditation. Her glowing radiance illuminated the place. She had clothes made of birch on her body (37-40).

[Note—Kalpa Tree is the evergreen tree of the Gods. It is said to possess mystical powers and can bestow all that is desired by an aspirant or seeker. The Botanical name of the Kalpa Tree is *Adansonis Digitta* ; it is also called 'Parijat' meaning 'descended from the sea', and 'Harsingar' meaning 'the decoration of the Gods, especially Lord Hari'. The English name of it is Coral Jasmine; in Latin it is called *Nyctanthes Arbor Tristis* (nyctanthes means the night flower, while arbor tristis means the sad tree). Its flower is said to be worn by the Gods. The orange colour of the flower is used for dying silk and cotton, a practice originating with Buddhist monks. According to legends, it was produced during the churning of the ocean for the search of Amrit, or the ambrosia of eternity and bliss, by the Demons and the Gods. The king of the Gods, Indra, took it away and planted it in his capital at Amravati. According to another legend (in Vishnu Puran), a princess named Parijat fell in love with the Sun God and followed him throughout the day. As night approached, the Sun became disenchanted with her and did not like her overtures any longer. Disillusioned and despaired, she died, and a tree grew up from the ashes at the site of her funeral pyre. The flower of this tree could not bear the sight of the Sun, and therefore it blooms during the night, and with the crack of dawn, it falls and dies.]

प्रणेमुस्तां महाभागां भक्त्या भीत्या च वानराः। दृष्ट्वा तान्वानरान्देवी प्राह यूयं किमागताः ।। 41 ।।
कुतो वा कस्य दूता वा मत्स्थानं किं प्रधर्षथ। तच्छ्रुत्वा हनुमानाह शृणु वक्ष्यामि देवि ते ।। 42 ।।
अयोध्याधिपतिः श्रीमान् राजा दशरथः प्रभुः। तस्य पुत्रो महाभागो ज्येष्ठो राम इति श्रुतः ।। 43 ।।

praṇemustāṃ mahābhāgāṃ bhaktyā bhītyā ca vānarāḥ /
dṛṣṭvā tānvānarāndevī prāha yūyaṃ kimāgatāḥ //
kuto vā kasya dūtā vā matsthānaṃ kiṃ pradharṣatha /
tacchrutvā hanumānāha śṛṇu vakṣyāmi devi te //

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ayodhyādhipatiḥ śrīmān rājā daśarathaḥ prabhuḥ /
tasya putro mahābhāgo jyeṣṭho rāma iti śrutaḥ //

Seeing that great soul, the monkeys bowed before her with respect and awe. Then that goddess looked at them and said, 'Why and from where have you all come? (41). Whose messengers are you? And why are you defiling my place?'

Hearing this, Hanuman replied, 'Oh goddess! I shall tell you everything. Listen (42)—'The most famous and majestic king Dashrath was the ruler of Ayodhya. His most fortunate eldest son is famed by the name of Sri Ram (43).

पितुराज्ञां पुरस्कृत्य सभार्यः सानुजो वनम्। गतस्तत्र हृता भार्या तस्य साध्वी दुरात्मना।। 44।।
रावणेन ततो रामः सुग्रीवं सानुजो ययौ। सुग्रीवो मित्रभावेन रामस्य प्रियवल्लभाम्।। 45।।

piturājñāṃ puraskṛtya sabhāryaḥ sānujo vanam /
gatastatra hṛtā bhāryā tasya sādhvī durātmanā //
rāvaṇena tato rāmaḥ sugrīvaṃ sānujo yayau /
sugrīvo mitrabhāvena rāmasya priyavallabhām //

Obeying the words of his father, he has come to the forest with his wife and younger brother. Here in the forest, his most virtuous, immaculate, loyal and chaste wife has been abducted by the sinful, vile and wicked (44) Ravana. After that unfortunate event, he has come to Sugriv along with his younger brother (Laxman) in search of Sita. Being friendly with Sri Ram, Sugriv has ordered us to search for the beloved wife of Sri Ram (45).

मृगयध्वमिति प्राह ततो वयमुपागताः। ततो वनं विचिन्वन्तो जानकीं जलकाङ्क्षिणः।। 46।।
प्रविष्टा गह्वरं घोरं दैवादत्र समागताः। त्वं वा किमर्थमत्रासि का वा त्वं वद नः शुभे।। 47।।

mṛgayadhvamiti prāha tato vayamupāgatāḥ /
tato vanaṃ vicinvanto jānakīṃ jalakāṅkṣiṇaḥ //
praviṣṭā gahvaraṃ ghoraṃ daivādatra samāgatāḥ /
tvaṃ vā kimarthamatrāsi kā vā tvaṃ vada naḥ śubhe //

Hence, we have come from there. Here we felt the need for water because we have become very thirsty while roaming here and there in the wilds in search of Sita (46). That is why all of us entered this formidable cave and by chance have come here. Oh the blessed and auspicious one! Why do you stay here, and who are you? Do tell us' (47).

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योगिनी च तथा दृष्ट्वा वानरान् प्राह हृष्टधीः। यथेष्टं फलमूलानि जग्ध्वा पीत्वामृतं पयः।। 48।।
आगच्छत ततो वक्ष्ये मम वृत्तान्तमादितः। तथेति भुक्त्वा पीत्वा च हृष्टास्ते सर्ववानराः।। 49।।
देव्याः समीपं गत्वा ते बद्धाञ्जलिपुटाः स्थिताः। ततः प्राह हनूमन्तं योगिनी दिव्यदर्शना।। 50।।

yoginī ca tathā dṛṣṭvā vānarān prāha hṛṣṭadhīḥ /
yatheṣṭaṃ phalamūlāni jagdhvā pītvāmṛtaṃ payaḥ //
āgacchata tato vakṣye mama vṛttāntamāditaḥ /
tatheti bhuktvā pītvā ca hṛṣṭāste sarvavānarāḥ //
devyāḥ samīpaṃ gatvā te baddhāñjalipuṭāḥ sthitāḥ /
tataḥ prāha hanūmantaṃ yoginī divyadarśanā //

The lady ascetic was very pleased and delighted to learn about this. She said to the monkeys, 'First, you should eat fruits and edible roots according to your wish and quench your thirst by drinking water (48). Then come to me and I shall tell you my full story from the beginning'.

Then all the monkeys said 'alright' and ate sufficient fruits and drank enough water to their hearts' content (49). Thence, they came to the exalted lady with a delighted and cheerful heart and stood before her with palms joined together in submission. Then the glorious looking ascetic said to Hanuman (50)—

हेमा नाम पुरा दिव्यरूपिणी विश्वकर्मणः। पुत्री महेशं नृत्येन तोशयामास भामिनी।। 51।।
तुष्टो महेशः प्रददाविदं दिव्यपुरं महत्। अत्र स्थिता सा सुदती वर्षाणामयुतायुतम्।। 52।।

hemā nāma purā divyarūpiṇi viśvakarmaṇaḥ /
putrī maheśaṃ nṛtyena tośayāmāsa bhāminī //
tuṣṭo maheśaḥ pradadāvidaṃ divyapuraṃ mahat /
atra sthitā mā sudatī varṣāṇāmayutāyutam //

'In some previous time, Vishwakarma (the architect and smith of the Gods) had a divine and beautiful-to-look-at daughter named Hema. She pleased Lord Shiva with her dance (51). He granted this large and magnificent divine city to her as a present (because he was very pleased with her dance). That lady with beautiful teeth stayed here for thousands of years (52).

तस्या अहं सखी विष्णुतत्परा मोक्षकाङ्क्षिणी। नाम्ना स्वयम्प्रभा दिव्यगन्धर्वतनया पुरा।। 53।।
गच्छन्ती ब्रह्मलोकं सा मामाहेदं तपश्चर। अत्रैव निवसन्ती त्वं सर्वप्राणिविवर्जिते।। 54।।

tasyā ahaṃ sakhī viṣṇutatparā mokṣakāṅkṣiṇī /
nāmnā svayamprabhā divyagandharvatanayā purā //

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gacchantī brahmalokaṃ sā māmāhedaṃ tapaścara /
atraiva nivasantī tvaṃ sarvaprāṇivivarjite //

I am her friend Swyamprabha, daughter of a Gandharva (a celestial musician; a class of semi God) named Divya. I am desirous of emancipation and salvation (53). When she (Hema) went back to the heavens, she said to me, 'You should stay at this lonely place and do severe austerities and penances (Tapa) (54).

त्रेता युगे दाशरथिर्भूत्वा नारायणोऽव्ययः। भूभारहरणार्थाय विचरिष्यति कानने।। 55।।
मार्गन्तो वानरास्तस्य भार्यामायान्ति ते गुहाम्। पूजयित्वाथ तान् नत्वा रामं स्तुत्वा प्रयत्नतः।।56।।
यातासि भवनं विष्णोर्योगिगम्यं सनातनम्। इतोऽहं गन्तुमिच्छामि रामं द्रष्टुं त्वरान्विता।।57।।

tretā yuge dāśarathirbhūtvā nārāyaṇo'vyayaḥ /
bhūbhāraharaṇārthāya vicariṣyati kānane //
mārganto vānarāstasya bhāryāmāyānti te guhām /
pūjayitvātha tān natvā rāmaṃ stutvā prayatnataḥ //
yātāsi bhavanaṃ viṣṇoryogigamyaṃ sanātanam /
ito'haṃ gantumicchāmi rāmaṃ draṣṭuṃ tvarānvitā //

During the Treta Yug, the supreme, un-manifest, attributeless and imperishable Lord Narayan (Vishnu) himself will make an incarnation (i.e. reveal himself) in the household of Dashrath and roam in the forest to remove the burden of the earth (55). Some monkeys shall come to your cave while searching for his lost (abducted) wife. You should then welcome them with due respect and then you should go to Sri Ram and worship him by singing his glories (i.e. say prayers to him in the form of Stotras) and then proceed to the eternal abode of Lord Vishnu which is attainable only by wise and exalted Yogis (ascetics). [That is why I am advising you to do penances, austerities and meditation)'.

Hence, I (know now that my moment has finally arrived, for which I have been waiting eagerly for such a long time, enduring all the hardships with fortitude and perseverance; so I) immediately wish to go and meet Sri Ram (because my long, patient wait has ended now) (56-57).

यूयं पिदध्वमक्षीणि गमिष्यथ बहिर्गुहाम्। तथैव चक्रुस्ते वेगाद्गताः पूर्वस्थितं वनम्।। 58।।
सापि त्यक्त्वा गुहां शीघ्रं ययौ राघवसन्निधिम्। तत्र रामं ससुग्रीवं लक्ष्मणं च ददर्श ह।।59।।
कृत्वा प्रदक्षिणं रामं प्रणम्य बहुशः सुधीः। आह गद्गदया वाचा रोमाञ्चिततनूरुहा।।60।।

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yūyaṃ pidadhvamakṣīṇi gamiṣyatha bahirguhām /
tathaiva cakruste vegādgatāḥ pūrvasthitaṃ vanam //
sāpi tyaktvā guhāṃ śīghraṃ yayau rāghavasannidhim /
tatra rāmaṃ sasugrīvaṃ lakṣmaṇaṃ ca dadarśa ha //
kṛtvā pradakṣiṇaṃ rāmaṃ praṇamya bahuśaḥ sudhīḥ /
āha gadgadayā vācā romāñcitatanūruhā //

All of you close your eyes; you will be out of the cave instantly'. They (the monkeys) did so and found themselves instantly outside the cave in the forest from where they had entered it (58). The Yogini (the exalted lady ascetic) too left the cave and immediately came to Sri Ram and had a Darshan (divine view) of him along with Sugriv and Laxman (59). That wise one circumambulated Sri Ram repeatedly and became thrilled in body. She prayed with an emotionally chocked voice (60).

दासी तवाहं राजेन्द्र दर्शनार्थमिहागता। बहुवर्षसहस्राणि तप्तं मे दुश्चरं तपः।।61।।
गुहायां दर्शनार्थं ते फलितं मेऽद्य तत्तपः। अद्य हि त्वां नमस्यामि मायायाः परतः स्थितम्।।62।।
सर्वभूतेषु चालक्ष्यं बहिरन्तरवस्थितम्। योगमायाजवनिकाच्छन्नो मानुषविग्रहः।।63।।

dāsī tavāhaṃ rājendra darśanārthamihāgatā /
bahuvarṣasahastrāṇi taptaṃ me duścaraṃ tapaḥ //
guhāyāṃ darśanārthaṃ te phalitaṃ me'dya tattapaḥ /
adya hi tvāṃ namasyāmi māyāyāḥ parataḥ sthitam //
sarvabhūteṣu cālakṣyaṃ bahirantaravasthitam /
yogamāyājavanikācchanno mānuṣavigrahaḥ //

'Oh King of kings (Sri Ram)! I am your devoted maid servant and have come here to have your Darshan. It is because I desired to have this privilege that I have stayed in a cave and have done severe austerities and penances for thousands of years. That effort has been successful and duly rewarded today. Ah! What a fortunate and auspicious day it is for me today that I am bowing personally to the Lord who is beyond Maya (delusion creating powers and its illusion-creating effects causing the huge trap of ignorance leading to hallucinations, misconceptions and misgivings of horrible nature), and who is present invisibly but inherently and as an integral part of all the elements (such as air, fire, earth, space, wind) in creation, both inside and outside of them (i.e. encompasses them all, and is universally present in all them uniformly). You have willingly sheathed (covered, enveloped, veiled) your pure-self with your

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'Yogmaya' (the great deluding powers of the Lord which was literally created by him through the medium of Yoga or meditation which he did prior to the creation coming into being, and which empowered him with the stupendous cosmic powers of creation, sustenance and annihilation that came to be known as Nature). As a result you have manifested yourself in a human form (because you had done Yoga to acquire this magical powers that enabled you not only to assume a form that has a gross body, though basically you have no form, but also to keep your truthful identity hidden form view and understanding; that is why no one has been able to recognize you inspite of living so close to you and interacting with you personally) (60-63).

न लक्ष्यसेऽज्ञानदृशां शैलूष इव रूपधृक्। महाभागवतानां त्वं भक्तियोगविधित्सया।। 64।।
अवतीर्णोऽसि भगवन् कथं जानामि तामसी। लोके जानातु यः कश्चित्तव तत्त्वं रघूत्तम।।65।।
ममैतदेव रूपं ते सदा भातु हृदालये। राम ते पादयुगलं दर्शितं मोक्षदर्शनम्।। 66।।

na lakṣyase'jñānadṛśāṃ śailūṣa iva rūpadhṛk/
mahābhāgavatānāṃ tvaṃ bhaktiyogavidhitsayā//
avatīrṇo'si bhagavan kathaṃ jānāmi tāmasī/
loke jānātu yaḥ kaścittava tattvaṃ raghūttama//
mamaitadeva rūpaṃ te sadā bhātu hṛdālaye/
rāma te pādayugalaṃ darśitaṃ mokṣadarśanam//

Even as a magician who has assumed an invisible form (i.e. has vanished from sight by using his magical tricks) is not seen by ordinary people who have been hypnotized by him, your eternal, true, attributeless, sublime, subtle and ethereal form is not visible (perceived) by them who are ignorant, unwise and not enlightened. You have incarnated/manifested yourself to establish the rules and fundamental principles for Bhakti (submission, humility, devotion, adoration, worship, dedication, reverence, faith, conviction and belief in divinity and God) which is to be pursued (adopted, followed) by those who are your ardent, sincere and great devotees (64).

Hence, how can I, who am of a 'Tam' dominated mind-intellect complex, ever come to know you[1]? Oh the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram)! Let those who consider themselves as erudite, sagacious, knowledgeable, educated and learned ones who have deeply studied the scriptures and have learned about the basic truth of existence, the Lord and the Atma say that they know about your supreme, essential

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and truthful nature/form (as the supreme entity that has no name, no form, no attributes, no honours and no titles, and which is invisible and indiscernible and imperceptible); let them have their way (65).

But as far as I am considered, let your present form (that is visible, attractive and enchanting with a bewitching smile, and which has done such great deeds and set such great examples for his devotees to follow and emulate, and which is easier to worship and adore and serve) reside in the abode of my heart forever. Oh Sri Ram! Today I have had the holy, divine and august Darshan (view) of these lotus-like feet of yours, the sight of which is able to provide emancipation and salvation to all (66).

[Note :—[1]Swayamprabha means that her mind and intellect apparatus is over-shadowed by the 3rd category of qualities, called Tam because they are lowly and base and dark in comparison to the other two qualities called Sat and Raj respectively. These qualities decide a creature's level of intelligence, wisdom, erudition and depth of understanding, his temperaments and inclinations, his behaviour and general outlook. This Tam quality is dominated by such base, lowly and mean qualities that a creature in whom this quality is predominant is considered as very sinful and not worthy of the exalted stature of getting emancipation and salvation ever in life. Such a creature is not righteous and not worthy of any good honour and fortune; he is ignorant and foolish, he is not competent and qualified to know the Lord's great and magnificent glories and fames; he is of a low intellect and stupid mind. So Swayamprabha is astonished at her good fortune and rare luck that inspite of her limitations and shortcomings, she is blessed with the boon that is not available to even great ascetics and attained souls. Obviously she was not sinful, for she had desired emancipation and salvation from the very beginning, and had been doing Tapa, which is purifying and capable of cleansing of the greatest of sins, but what she has said is just to show her humility and submission before the supreme Lord. These words are a mark of her simplicity and devotion for the Lord. Further, it would be incongruous to imagine that she would boast of her eligibility for emancipation and salvation before the Lord; that would have been highly improper and impolite on her part.]

अदर्शनं भवार्णानां सन्मार्गपरिदर्शनम्। धनपुत्रकलत्रादिविभूतिपरिदर्पितः।
अकिञ्चनधनं त्वाद्य नाभिधातुं जनोऽर्हति।। 67।।

adarśanaṃ bhavārṇānāṃ sanmārgaparidarśanam/
dhanaputrakalatrādivibhūtiparidarpitaḥ /
akiñcanadhanaṃ tvādya nābhidhātuṃ jano'rhati//

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These divine, holy and august feet of yours are capable of helping one to cross over this river-like mundane world and can enlighten one on the path of righteousness, truthfulness, propriety and probity. Those people who are intoxicated with pride and ego, who are arrogant and haughty of their worldly wealth and prosperity, their sons and wife, their virtues, expertise, qualities and excellence, their dignity, majesty and glory—they cannot pray to you because you are the only asset of those who are penniless and have-nots (67).

[Note—This verse emphasizes that the Lord is inaccessible to those who are boastful and arrogant of themselves and their achievements. This is reflective of the Christ's assertion that the kingdom of God belongs to the humble and meek when he said—'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Holy Bible, St. Matthew, 5/5, 8)]

निवृत्तगुणमार्गाय निष्किञ्चनधनाय ते।।68।।
नमः स्वात्माभिरामाय निर्गुणाय गुणात्मने। कालरूपिणमीशानमादिमध्यान्तवर्जितम्।।69।।
समं चरन्तं सर्वत्र मन्ये त्वां पुरुषं परम्। देव ते चेष्टितं कश्चिन्न वेद नृविडम्बनम्।।70।।

nivṛttaguṇamārgāya niṣkiñcanadhanāya te//
namaḥ svātmābhirāmāya nirguṇāya guṇātmane/
kālarūpiṇamīśānamādimadhyāntavarjitam //
samaṃ carantaṃ sarvatra manye tvāṃ puruṣaṃ param/
deva te ceṣṭitaṃ kaścinna veda nṛviḍambanam//

You are beyond the reach of various virtues and qualities (i.e. you cannot be measured and assessed by these yardsticks), and you are the asset (wealth) of the have-nots and those who have no worldly resources at their disposal (for they find succour and solace in you, they find in you their Godfather for you are very munificent, benevolent and magnanimous towards penniless and unfortunate ones) (68).

I bow reverentially and pay my obeisance to you who remains ever contented by meditating on his pure self and dwells permanently in it, and who is essentially 'Nirgun' (formless, nameless and without any attributes) but is imagined as having a 'Sagun' form (which is the opposite of Nirgun—i.e. it is visualized that you have a form, have attributes and a name).

I regard you as the controller of all that exists in this creation in your form as 'Kaal' (time, circumstance, period, end and death). You are without a beginning, middle or an end (69), are universally all-

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pervading and uniformly omnipresent, and are the supreme transcendental Purush (i.e. the macrocosmic Male aspect of Nature; the Viraat Purush). Oh Lord! The tricks that you play as a human are so mysteriously strange, stupendously magnificent and fascinating, and marvelously glorious that no one can know their secret and fathom them (70).

न तेऽस्ति कश्चिद्ददयितो द्वेष्यो वापर एव च। त्वन्मायापिहितात्मानस्त्वां पश्यन्ति तथाविधम्।। 71।।
अजस्याकर्तुरीशस्य देवतिर्यङ्नरादिषु। जन्मकर्मादिकं यद्यत्तदत्यन्तविडम्बनम्।। 72।।

na te'sti kaściddayito dveṣyo vāpara eva ca/
tvanmāyāpihitātmānastvāṃ paśyanti tathāvidham//
ajasyākarturīśasya devatiryaṅnarādiṣu/
janmakarmādikaṃ yadyattadatyantaviḍambanam//

You have no one who is your favourite, opposed to you or indifferent to you (i.e. you are equitable towards all and do not distinguish between any one based upon his birth, race, religion, caste, creed etc.). Those whose inner-self is sheathed by (i.e. is covered, enveloped or veiled by, is under the influence of) the deluding spell of your magical charm called Maya are the only ones who look upon you (i.e. think about you, see you, perceive you, seek you, worship you and honour you) as per their basic inherent inclinations and tendencies as well as their imaginations and understandings (71).

You are the supreme transcendental Lord who does not have a birth and who does not do anything (i.e. who remains neutral and dispassionate, who is a renunciate and remains detached from the creation and its various trappings). The various manifestations that you make as a Deva (Gods), a Tiryak (those born as birds and animals) or as a human being and other forms, and then do the various deeds and take the numerous actions in these forms, are nothing else but a mysterious, strange, fascinating and marvelous display of your stupendous glories and maverick potentials which are beyond comprehension and understanding (72).

त्वामाहुरक्षरं जातं कथाश्रवणसिद्धये। केचित्कोसलराजस्य तपसः फलसिद्धये।। 73।।
कौसल्यया प्रार्थ्यमानं जातमाहुः परे जनाः। दुष्टराक्षसभूभारहरणायार्थितो विभुः।। 74।।
ब्रह्मणा नररूपेण जातोऽयमिति केचन। शृण्वन्ति गायन्ति च ये कथास्ते रघुनन्दन।। 75।।
पश्यन्ति तव पादाब्जं भवार्णवसुतारणम्। त्वन्मायागुणबद्धाहं व्यतिरिक्तं गुणाश्रयम्।। 76।।

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tvāmāhurakṣaraṃ jātaṃ kathāśravaṇasiddhaye /
kecitkosalarājasya tapasaḥ phalasiddhaye //
kausalyayā prārthyamānaṃ jātamāhuḥ pare janāḥ /
duṣṭarākṣasabhūbhāraharaṇāyārthito vibhuḥ //
brahmaṇā nararūpeṇa jāto'yamiti kecana /
śṛṇvanti gāyanti ca ye kathāste raghunandana //
paśyanti tava pādābjaṃ bhavārṇavasutāraṇam /
tvanmāyāguṇabaddhāhaṃ vyatiriktaṃ guṇāśrayam //

It is said by some that you are the imperishable and eternal Lord who has taken birth (i.e. have revealed yourself) in order to spread and establish the importance of hearing your 'Katha' (i.e. your divine and holy stories). Others say that you have taken birth to reward the king of Kaushal (Dashrath) for his severe penances and austerities (Tapa) (73).

Some say that you have manifested yourself due to the prayers of Kaushalya, while according to others, the Vibhu (omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal, almighty Lord) has taken birth as a human to remove the burden of the earth caused by the evil and wicked demons by destroying them (74) at the behest (prayers) of Brahma (the creator). Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Those who shall sing or narrate your divine stories shall surely have a divine vision of your lotus-like holy feet which are like a boat to take one across this mundane, entrapping and deluding world.

Oh Lord! I am under the influence and spell of the deluding powers of your Maya (and their accompanying characteristics and qualities)—say, then how can I ever be able to know (fathom, measure, understand) you who are totally distinct and separate from them and on whom they (i.e. the Maya inspired characteristics) are dependent (75-76).

कथं त्वां देव जानीयं स्तोतुं वाविषयं विभुम्। नमस्यामि रघुश्रेष्ठं बाणासनशरान्वितम्।
लक्ष्मणेन सह भ्रात्रा सुग्रीवादिभिरन्वितम्।।77।।

kathaṃ tvāṃ deva jānīyaṃ stotuṃ vāviṣayaṃ vibhum /
namasyāmi raghuśreṣṭhaṃ bāṇāsanaśarānvitam /
lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātā sugrīvādibhiranvitam //

Similarly, since you are beyond the powers of speech that it can describe or define you, then say oh Lord, how can I praise you or say

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your prayers. Oh Vibho (omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal and almighty Lord)! I can only most humbly bow reverentially before you who holds a bow and arrow and is the best in king Raghu's clan, along with your brother Laxman and Sugriv etc. (who are your beloved followers and ardent devotees)' (77).

[Note :—Verse nos. 61-77 is the prayer done by Swyamprabha in honour of Sri Ram. It can also be called her gospel.]

एवं स्तुतो रघुश्रेष्ठः प्रसन्नः प्रणताघहृत्। उवाच योगिनीं भक्तां किं ते मनसि काङ्क्षितम्।। 78।।
सा प्राह राघवं भक्त्या भक्तिं ते भक्तवत्सल। यत्र कुत्रापि जाताया निश्चलां देहि मे प्रभो।।79।।

evaṃ stuto raghuśreṣṭhaḥ prasannaḥ praṇatāghahṛt /
uvāca yoginīṃ bhaktāṃ kiṃ te manasi kāṅkṣitam //
sā prāha rāghavaṃ bhaktyā bhaktiṃ te bhaktavatsala /
yatra kutrāpi jātāyā niścalāṃ dehi me prabho //

When she had prayed in this manner, the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)—who 'feeds on' (devours, eliminates, removes, destroys, helps vanquish and conquer) the various sins, vices, evils, misdeeds and misdemeanors of those who surrender themselves before him—became very pleased with her, and said to that ardent devotee Yogini (called Swyamprabha), 'What is your sincere desire?' (78).

She replied most reverentially, 'Oh Lord who is dear, munificent, magnanimous and benevolent towards his devotees! Let me have an eternal, unwavering, pure and truthful devotion for you wherever I am born (79).

त्वद्भक्तेषु सदा सङ्गो भूयान्मे प्राकृतेषु न। जिह्वा मे रामरामेति भक्त्या वदतु सर्वदा।। 80।।
मानसं श्यामलं रूपं सीतालक्ष्मणसंयुतम्। धनुर्बाणधरं पीतवाससं मुकुटोज्ज्वलम्।।81।।
अङ्गदैर्नूपुरैर्मुक्ताहारैः कौस्तुभकुण्डलैः। भान्तं स्मरतु मे राम वरं नान्यं वृणे प्रभो।।82।।

tvadbhakteṣu sadā saṅgo bhūyānme prākṛteṣu na /
jihvā me rāmarāmeti bhaktyā vadatu sarvadā //
mānasaṃ śyāmalaṃ rūpaṃ sītālakṣmaṇasaṃyutam /
dhanurbāṇadharaṃ pītavāsasaṃ mukuṭojjvalam //
aṅgadairnūpurairmuktāhāraiḥ kaustubhakuṇḍalaiḥ /
bhāntaṃ smaratu me rāma varaṃ nānyaṃ vṛṇe prabho //

Let me have communion with your devotees in each of my births in which I am born, and not with worldly people. Let my tongue always chant/repeat 'Ram-Ram' persistently, constantly and consistently with greatest of dedication, sincerity, devotion, faith and

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conviction (80). My Mana (mind-heart complex; the emotion and thoughts) should always think of (i.e. reflect, focus and contemplate upon) your beautiful dark image or form together with Sita and Laxman—an image or form which has (holds) a bow and arrow, is adorned by a Pitambar (yellow, seamless, silk, body wrapping garment worn by Vishnu), a radiant crown, brilliant arm bands, anklets, a pearl necklace, a Kaustav Mani (a gem worn by Vishnu) and large ear-rings. Oh Lord! I do not seek any other blessing or boon other than this' (81-82).

श्रीराम उवाच

भवत्वेवं महाभागे गच्छ त्वं बदरीवनम्। तत्रैव मां स्मरन्ती त्वं त्यक्त्वेदं भूतपञ्चकम्।
मामेव परमात्मानमचिरात्प्रतिपद्यसे ।। 83 ।।

śrīrāma uvāca

bhavatvevaṃ mahābhāge gaccha tvaṃ badarīvanam /
tatraiva māṃ samarantī tvaṃ tyaktvedaṃ bhūtapañcakam /
māmeva paramātmānamacirātpratipadyase //

Sri Ram replied, 'Oh the most fortunate one! It shall be so. Now you should go to Badrikashram. There you should keep on remembering and meditating upon me and my divine form, and in due course of time, you should abandon this body made of the five elements and attain the Parmatma (the supreme Soul) who is non other than me' (83).

[Note :—'Badrikashram' is located in the Himalayas in the extreme north of India, and is one of the most holy pilgrim site for Hindus. There, the image of Lord Vishnu is worshipped. The other three sacred sites are—Dwarka pertaining to Lord Krishna in the west, Puri pertaining to Lord Jagannath in the east, and Rameshwaram in the south where the presiding deity is Lord Shiva.]

श्रुत्वा रघूत्तमवचोऽमृतसारकल्पं गत्वा तदैव बदरीतरुखण्डजुष्टम्।
तीर्थं तदा रघुपतिं मनसा स्मरन्ती त्यक्त्वा कलेवरमवाप परं पदं सा ।। 84 ।।

śrutvā raghūttamavaco'mṛtasārakalpaṃ
gatvā tadaiva badarītarukhaṇḍajuṣṭam /
tīrthaṃ tadā raghupatiṃ manasā smarantī
tyaktvā kalevaramavāpa paraṃ padaṃ sā //

Hearing these words which were as sweet and divine as Amrit (an elixir of life; nectar-like ambrosia of eternity and bliss) of the most

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exalted Raghu (Sri Ram), she immediately went to the holy place called Badri where there were many plum trees. There, she spent her days remembering Raghupati (Sri Ram) in her heart, and at last she left her mortal coil (her body) and achieved the most superior stature of being one with the Lord (84).

***

Kishkindha Kand — Canto 7

Angad's remorse; Search for Sita resumed; Meeting with Sampati

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

अथ तत्र समासीना वृक्षखण्डेषु वानराः। चिन्तयन्तो विमुह्यन्तः सीतामार्गणकर्षिताः।। 1।।
तत्रोवाचाङ्गदः कांश्चिद्वानरान् वानरर्षभः। भ्रमतां गह्वरेऽस्माकं मासो नूनं गतोऽभवत्।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

atha tatra samāsīnā vṛkṣakhaṇḍeṣu vānarāḥ /
cintayanto vimuhyantaḥ sītāmārgaṇakarśitāḥ //
tatrovācāṅgadaḥ kāṃścidvānarān vānararṣabhaḥ /
bhramatāṃ gahvare'smākaṃ māso nūnaṃ gato'bhavat //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Here meanwhile, the monkeys were tired and weary from the endless search for Sita. They sat gloomily, remorseful, anxious, dejected and worried, at a place surrounded by dense trees near a cave (1). At that time, the exalted monkey Angad said to some of the monkeys, 'It looks that we have already spent one month wandering in this mountainous labyrinthine cave and the surrounding intractable glen (2).

सीता नाधिगतास्माभिर्नं कृतं राजशासनम्। यदि गच्छमः किष्किन्धां सुग्रीवोऽस्मान् हनिष्यति।। 3।।
विशेषतः शत्रुसुतं मां मिषान्निहनिष्यति। मयि तस्य कुतः प्रीतिरहं रामेण रक्षितः।। 4।।

sītā nādhigatāsmābhirna kṛtaṃ rājaśāsanam /
yadi gacchāma kiṣkindhāṃ sugrīvo'smān haniṣyati //
viśeṣataḥ śatrusutaṃ māṃ miṣānnihaniṣyati /
mayi tasya kutaḥ prītirahaṃ rāmeṇa rakṣitaḥ //

But till date we have not found any trace of Sita. We have not been able to obey the orders of the king (Sugriv). If we now return to

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Kishkindha empty handed, it is certain that he will kill us (3). Especially he will find this as an excuse to kill me because I am the son of his enemy (Vaali). How can he ever have any affection for me? I have only Sri Ram alone as my protector (i.e. he is the only one who favours me) (4).

[Note—This was no mean achievement for Angad that he realised that the supreme Lord was the only one who protects him. Such a faith and conviction is what the Lord requires and expects from his devotees. Angad wins hands down on this front. But the question arises—then why does he fear from Sugriv, which is also clear from verse no.5-6 below? The answer is perhaps that he understood the practical thing that after the work is over, the Lord would return to his capital at Ayodhya, and he would be left at the mercy of his uncle who has been the killer of his own brother and can therefore have no affection for his nephew. On one pretext or the other, he would eliminate him, and if the Lord demands an explanation from him, he would proffer some cooked up story. That also explains why, at the time of bidding farewell to the guests after the Lord's coronation at Ayodhya after his successful return back, Angad was most reluctant and unwilling to leave him and return to Kishkindha, the capital city of the monkeys. He feared for his life. But the Lord knew that Sugriv dare not harm Angad, and that is why, amongst other reasons, the Lord insisted that he must return. The Lord relied upon and loved Angad so much that when Angad jammed his legs in the court of Ravana, staking the fate of Sita on the ability of Ravana in lifting his foot planted on the ground, which in any case the latter failed to do, the Lord never chided Angad for taking such a rash action and putting at great risk the entire campaign without any prior approval of the Lord. Just imagine what would have happened if Ravana had been successful in lifting Angad's foot; that would have been disastrous for the Lord. Angad had so much confidence in his faith and conviction in the Lord's powers and potentials that he did not think twice before planting his legs and staking Sita! This is the level of faith and belief that the Lord requires for providing emancipation and salvation to a creature.]

इदानीं रामकार्यं मे न कृतं तन्मिषं भवेत्। तस्य मद्धनने नूनं सुग्रीवस्य दुरात्मनः ॥ 5 ॥
मातृकल्पां भ्रातृभार्यां पापात्मानुभवत्यसौ। न गच्छेयमतः पार्श्वं तस्य वानरपुङ्गवा ॥ 6 ॥

idānīṃ rāmakāryaṃ me na kṛtaṃ tanmiṣaṃ bhavet /
tasya maddhanane nūnaṃ sugrīvasya durātmanaḥ //
mātṛkalpāṃ bhrātṛbhāryāṃ pāpātmānubhavatyasau /
na gaccheyamataḥ pārśvaṃ tasya vānarapuṅgavāḥ //

Now that I have not been successful in doing Sri Ram's work, it

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will give that evil and wicked Sugriv a ready made excuse to eliminate (kill) me (5). That vile and sinful one is enjoying the wife of his elder brother who is like his mother. Hence, oh the most superior monkeys, I shall not go back to him at any cost (6).

[Note :—Verse nos. 4-6 highlights Angad's indignation and loathe for Sugriv and his ignominious deed of keeping his elder brother's wife, who happens to be Angad's mother, as his mistress.]

त्यक्ष्यामि जीवितं चात्र येन केनापि मृत्युना। इत्यश्रुनयनं केचिद् दृष्ट्वा वानरपुङ्गवाः।। 7।।
व्यथिताः साश्रुनयना युवराजमथाब्रुवन्।। 8।।
किमर्थं तव शोकोऽत्र वयं ते प्राणरक्षकाः। भवामो निवसामोऽत्र गुहायां भयवर्जिताः।।9।।

tyakṣyāmi jīvitaṃ cātra yena kenāpi mṛtyunā /
ityaśrunayanaṃ keciddṛṣṭvā vānarapuṅgavāḥ //
vyathitāḥ sāśrunayanā yuvarājamathābruvan //
kimarthaṃ tava śoko'tra vayaṃ te prāṇarakṣakāḥ /
bhavāmo nivasāmo'tra guhāyāṃ bhayavarjitāḥ //

By some means I shall end my life here'.

Seeing him with such a gloomy, remorseful, dejected, hopeless, hapless and contrite mood, with tears welling up in his eyes (7), many a senior monkeys felt extremely perturbed, gloomy, indignant and sorrowful. They said to the crown prince (Angad) with tearful eyes (8), 'Why do you regret and feel sorry and remorseful so much? We shall all protect you and fearlessly live with you in this cave (9).

सर्वसौभाग्यसहितं पुरं देवपुरोपमम्। शनैः परस्परं वाक्यं वदतां मारुतात्मजः।। 10।।
श्रुत्वाङ्गदं समालिङ्ग्य प्रोवाच नयकोविदः। विचार्यते किमर्थं ते दुर्विचारो न युज्यते।।11।।
राज्ञोऽत्यन्तप्रियस्त्वं हि तारापुत्रोऽतिवल्लभः। रामस्य लक्ष्मणात्प्रीतिस्त्वयि नित्यं प्रवर्धते।।12।।

sarvasaubhāgyasahitaṃ puraṃ devapuropamam /
śanaiḥ parasparaṃ vākyaṃ vadatāṃ mārutātmaja //
śrutvāṅgadaṃ samāliṅgya provāca nayakovidaḥ /
vicāryate kimarthaṃ te durvicāro na yujyate //
rājño'tyantapriyastvaṃ hi tārāputro'tivallabhaḥ /
rāmasya lakṣmaṇātprītistvayi nityaṃ pravardhate //

The city inside the cave (where Swyamprabha Yogini used to live—see Canto 6, verse 52) is fully provided with all the requirements of comforts and necessities of life'.

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When these reassuring soft and kind words spoken by the monkeys eventually fell in the ears of Hanuman (i.e. when Hanuman became aware of these murmurings) (10), he—who was very wise and an expert in all the rules and regulations governing behaviour in this world—embraced Angad affectionately and said, 'Oh Angad! Why do you feel so sorry and contrite, and why do you worry in this way. You should not have any sort of bad and depressing thoughts (11).

You are the dearest son of Tara, that is why you are very dear to Sugriv too. And as for Sri Ram, his love for you gets enhanced by each passing day as compared even to Laxman (12).

अतो न राघवाद्भीतिस्तव राज्ञो विशेषतः। अहं तव हिते सक्तो वत्स नान्यं विचारय।। 13।।
गुहावासश्च निर्भेद्य इत्युक्तं वानरैस्तु यत्। तदेतद्रामबाणानामभेद्यं किं जगत्त्रये।।14।।

ato na rāghavādbhītistava rājño viśeṣataḥ/
ahaṃ tava hite sakto vatsa nānyaṃ vicāraya//
guhāvāsaśca nirbhedya ityuktaṃ vānaraistu yat/
tadetadrāmabāṇānāmabhedyaṃ kiṃ jagattraye//

Hence, you should have no fear or doubt either from Raghav's (Sri Ram's) side or from the king's (Sugriv) side. Besides, I am always with you and eager to look after your welfare. So, oh son, you should not worry unnecessarily for imaginary things (13). And what about these monkeys who said that there is no danger in this cave (see verse no. 9 above)? Which place is there in the entire world that cannot be pierced by the arrows of Sri Ram (should he decide to kill you) (14).

ये त्वां दुर्बोधयन्त्येते वानरा वानरर्षभ। पुत्रदारादिकं त्यक्त्वा कथं स्थास्यन्ति ते त्वया।। 15।।
अन्यद्गुह्यतमं वक्ष्ये रहस्यं शृणु मे सुत। रामो न मानुषो देवः साक्षान्नारायणोऽव्ययः।।16।।

ye tvāṃ durbodhayantyete vānarā vānararṣabha/
putradārādikaṃ tyaktvā kathaṃ sthāsyanti te tvayā//
anyadguhyatamaṃ vakṣye rahasyaṃ śṛṇu me suta/
rāmo na mānuṣo devaḥ sākṣānnārāyaṇo'vyayaḥ//

Oh the exalted monkey (Angad)! Those monkeys who are giving you this advice, how will they live with you without their wives and sons (their families) for a long time? (15).

Besides this, dear son, I shall tell you a secret (i.e. a thing which is not known by the general public but remains within the confined knowledge of a few enlightened souls)—listen carefully. Sri Ram is

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no ordinary human. Is the personification of the eternal, unchanging, imperishable and faultless Lord Narayan (Vishnu himself) (16).

सीता भगवती माया जनसम्मोहकारिणी। लक्ष्मणो भुवनाधारः साक्षाच्छेषः फणीश्वरः।। 17।।
ब्रह्मणा प्रार्थिताः सर्वे रक्षोगणविनाशने। मायामानुषभावेन जाता लोकैकरक्षकाः।। 18।।

sītā bhagavatī māyā janasammohakāriṇī /
lakṣmaṇo bhuvanādhāraḥ sākṣāccheṣaḥ phaṇiśvaraḥ //
brahmaṇā prārthitāḥ sarve rakṣogaṇavināśane /
māyāmānuṣabhāvena jātā lokaikarakṣakāḥ //

Sita is Bhagwati (goddess of creation; literally, the one half of the cosmic Lord) as well as is the Lord's Maya (delusion creating powers as well as his infinite, cosmic creative energy) which enthralls, attracts and captivates the world and keeps it hypnotized it under its magical spell. Laxman is the personification of Sheshnath himself, the legendary king of serpents who holds the creation on its hood (17). They have manifested/revealed themselves in an illusionary image like that of humans on the prayers (i.e. behest) of Brahma in order to destroy and eliminate the demons (representing the evil, pervert, sinful, unrighteous and vile forces of the world). Each one out of them is capable of saving and protecting the world independently (18).

वयं च पार्षदाः सर्वे विष्णोर्वैकुण्ठवासिनः। मनुष्यभावमापन्ने स्वेच्छया परमात्मनि।। 19।।
वयं वानररूपेण जातास्तस्यैव मायया। वयं तु तपसा पूर्वमाराध्य जगतां पतिम्।। 20।।

vayaṃ ca pārṣadāḥ sarve viṣṇorvaikuṇṭhavāsinaḥ /
manuṣyabhāvamāpanne svecchayā paramātmani //
vayaṃ vānararūpeṇa jātāstasyaiva māyayā /
vayaṃ tu tapasā pūrvamārādhya jagatāṃ patim //

All of us are also fortunate enough to be servants and subordinates of Lord Vishnu who has his abode in Vaikunth. When the Parmatma (surpeme transcendental Soul; the Lord) decided out of his own free will to assume a human form (19), we too became monkeys relying upon and employing his magical powers called his Maya (in order to serve him). During some previous time, we had all worshipped the Lord of the World by doing severe Tapa (austerities and penances; observing religious vows and keeping stern control over our selves), and by his grace and kindness we had become his servants and subordinates so that we can have a rare opportunity to serve him (20).

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तेनैवानुगृहीताः स्मः पार्षदत्वमुपागताः। इदानीमपि तस्यैव सेवां कृत्वैव मायया।।21।।
पुनर्वैकुण्ठमासाद्य सुखं स्थास्यामहे वयम्। इत्यङ्गदमथाश्वास्य गता विन्ध्यं महाचलम्।।22।।
विचिन्वन्तोऽथ शनकैर्जानकीं दक्षिणाम्बुधेः। तीरे महेन्द्राख्यगिरेः पवित्रं पादमाययुः।।23।।

tenaivānugṛhītāḥ smaḥ pārṣadatvamupāgatāḥ/
idānīmapi tasyaiva sevāṃ kṛtvaiva māyayā//
punarvaikuṇṭhamāsādya sukhaṃ sthāsyāmahe vayam/
ityaṅgadamathāśvāsya gatā vindhyaṃ mahācalam//
vicinvanto'tha śanakairjānakīṃ dakṣiṇāmbudheḥ/
tīre mahendrākhyagireḥ pavitraṃ pādayāyayuḥ//

Even now, at the behest of his Maya, we shall serve him as his servants and subordinates (21), and at the end we shall all go back to Baikunth and live happily with him'.

In this manner, Hanuman consoled, encouraged and reassured Angad. After that, all of them went to the Vindhyachal mountain (22). They gradually moved southwards in search of Sita and reached the shores of the south sea near the holy and auspicious valley of mount Mahendra (23).

[Note :—In verse nos. 11-22, Hanuman has shown his practical wisdom and persuasive skills, and succeeded in removing all the misgivings of Angad.]

दृष्ट्वा समुद्रं दुष्पारमगाधं भयवर्धनम्। वानरा भयसन्त्रस्ताः किं कुर्म इति वादिनः।। 24।।
निषेदुरुदधेस्तीरे सर्वे चिन्तासमन्विताः। मन्त्रयामासुरन्योन्यमङ्गदाद्या महाबलाः।। 25।।

dṛṣṭvā samudraṃ duṣpāramagādhaṃ bhayavardhanam/
vānarā bhayasaṃtrastāḥ kiṃ kurma iti vādinaḥ//
niṣedurudadhestīre sarve cintāsamanvitāḥ/
mantrayāmāsuranyonyamaṅgadādyā mahābalāḥ//

Once there, they became extremely frightened and dismayed on seeing the vast formidable ocean which stretched endlessly in their front, which was fathomless and measureless in its dimensions and extension. The ocean was very awe inspiring, and it only went to enhance their great fear of failure and their abject despair at it. They wondered what to do next (24).

Angad and other most valorous and valiant monkeys sat gloomily and in a pensive mood on the shores of the ocean, most worried and overwhelmed with consternations, bewilderments and remorse, and discussed amongst themselves as follows (25)—

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भ्रमतो मे वने मासो गतोऽत्रैव गुहान्तरे। न दृष्टो रावणो वाद्य सीता वा जनकात्मजा।। 26।।
सुग्रीवस्तीक्ष्णदण्डोऽस्मान्निहन्त्येव न संशयः। सुग्रीववधतोऽस्माकं श्रेयः प्रायोपवेशनम्।। 27।।
इति निश्चित्य तत्रैव दर्भानास्तीर्य सर्वतः। उपाविवेशुस्ते सर्वे मरणे कृतनिश्चयाः।। 28।।

bhramato me vane māso gato'traiva guhāntare /
na dṛṣṭo rāvaṇo vādya sītā vā janakātmajā //
sugrīvastīkṣṇadaṇḍa'smānnihatyeva na saṃśayaḥ /
sugrīvavadhato'smākaṃ śreyaḥ prāyopaveśanam //
iti niścitya tatraiva darbhānāstīrya sarvataḥ /
upāviveśuste sarve maraṇe kṛtaniścayāḥ //

'Ah! Alas! We spent a month wandering in the forest and roaming in that cave and surrounding glen. But we have not yet been able to see either Ravana or the daughter of Janak (Sita) till now (26). Sugriv is severe in meting out punishments. He shall instantly and without remorse and doubt kill all of us. Instead of dying at the hands of Sugriv, it is better for us to die without food and water here' (27).

Deciding thus, they spread grass on the floor and sat on it, determined to end their lives (by hunger and thirst) (28).

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे तत्र महेन्द्रादिगुहान्तरात्। निर्गत्य शनकैरागाद्गृध्रः पर्वतसन्निभः।। 29।।
दृष्ट्वा प्रायोपवेशेन स्थितान्वानरपुङ्गवान्। उवाच शनकैर्गृध्रः प्राप्तो भक्ष्योऽद्य मे बहुः।। 30।।
एकैकशः क्रमात्सर्वान् भक्षयामि दिने दिने। श्रुत्वा तद्गृध्रवचनं वानरा भीतमानसाः।। 31।।

etasminnantare tatra mahendrādiguhāntarāt /
nirgatya śanakairāgādgṛdhraḥ parvatasannibhaḥ //
dṛṣṭvā prāyopaveśena sthitānvānarapuṅgavān /
uvāca śanakairgṛdhraḥ prāpto bhakṣyo'dya me bahuḥ //
ekaikaśaḥ kramātsarvān bhakṣayāmi dine dine /
śrutvā tadgṛdhravacanaṃ vānarā bhītamānasāḥ //

At about this time, a mountain-like huge vulture came out of a cave in the Mahendra mountain, and slowly walked towards them (29). Seeing those huge monkeys ready to die without food and water, he muttered softly and contentedly, 'Today I have got a lot of food to eat (30). I shall eat them one by one daily'. Hearing these words of the vulture, the monkeys were petrified with terror and said (31)—

भक्षयिष्यति नः सर्वानसौ गृध्रो न संशयः। रामकार्यं च नास्माभिः कृतं किञ्चिद्धरीश्वराः।। 32।।
सुग्रीवस्यापि च हितं न कृतं स्वात्मनामपि। वृथानेन वधं प्राप्ता गच्छामो यमसादनम्।। 33।।

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bhakṣayiṣyati naḥ sarvānasau gṛdhro na saṃśayaḥ /
rāmakāryaṁ ca nāsmābhiḥ kṛtaṃ kiñciddharīśvarāḥ //
sugrīvasyāpi ca hitaṃ na kṛtaṃ svātmanāmapi /
vṛthānena vadhaṃ prāptā gacchāmo yamasādanam //

'Alas! Without doubt, this vulture shall eat all of us. Oh the patron God of monkeys! We have not been able to do any work of Sri Ram nor of Sugriv, and neither have we done any good for ourselves. We have failed miserably and have spent our time and lives in vain. Now we shall be killed by this vulture and go to hell (32-33).

[Note :—One is left to wonder about the depressive and hopeless mood of these monkeys. These are the same brave and fearless fellows who had punched an ogre and killed him in Canto 6, verse no. 32, but are now afraid of an old vulture. The lesson inferred from this is that if we lose our courage and enthusiasm, even trifles and the not-so-trifles might seem insurmountable hurdles/obstacles, while with zeal and courage, we can even get over colossal obstructions and seemingly insurmountable difficulties. The same was the case with the formidable ocean in front of them. When Hanuman decided finally to cross it, the ocean could not stop him from doing so. Similarly, Sri Ram also was able to bridge it, i.e. overcome it, once he finally decided to it. All hurdles and obstructions in life are removed once we start get going, once we stop procrastinating and take some constructive action.]

अहो जटायुर्धर्मात्मा रामस्यार्थे मृतः सुधीः। मोक्षं प्राप दुरावापं योगिनामप्यरिन्दमः।। 34।।
सम्पातिस्तु तदा वाक्यं श्रुत्वा वानरभाषितम्। के वा यूयं मम भ्रातुः कर्णपीयूषसन्निभम्।।35।।
जटायुरिति नामाद्य व्याहरन्तः परस्परम्। उच्यतां वो भयं माभून्मत्तः प्लवगसत्तमाः।। 36।।

aho jaṭāyurdharmātmā rāmasyārthe mṛtaḥ sudhīḥ /
mokṣaṃ prāpa durāvāpaṃ yogināmapyarindamaḥ //
sampātistu tadā vākyaṃ śrutvā vānarabhāṣitam /
ke vā yūyaṃ mama bhrātuḥ karṇapīyūṣasannibham //
jaṭāyuriti nāmadya vyāharantaḥ parasparam /
ucyatāṃ vo bhayaṃ mā bhūnmattaḥ plavagasattamāḥ //

'Ah! The righteous Jatau was blessed and fortunate. That wise one died while doing the work of Sri Ram (i.e. he was so fortunate that he laid down his life in the service of the Lord). He attained emancipation and salvation which is rare (difficult) even for the exalted Yogis (ascetics) to achieve' (34).

Hearing these words of the monkeys, Sampati said, 'Oh you great

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monkeys! Who are you that you talk amongst yourselves about my brother Jatau? These words appear like nectar for my ears. Do not at all be afraid of me, and tell me about yourselves' (35-36).

तमुवाचाङ्गदः श्रीमानुत्थितो गृध्रसन्निधौ। रामो दाशरथिः श्रीमान् लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः।। 37।।
सीतया भार्यया सार्धं विचचार महावने। तस्य सीता हृता साध्वी रावणेन दुरात्मना।। 38।।

tamuvācāṅgadaḥ śrīmānutthito gṛdhrasannidhau /
rāmo dāśarathiḥ śrīmān lakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ //
sītayā bhāryayā sārdhaṃ vicacāra mahāvane /
tasya sītā hṛtā sādhvī rāvaṇena durātmanā //

Then Angad got up, went near that vulture and politely said, 'Dashrath's son Sri Ram, along with Laxman (37) and wife Sita, was roaming in the great and dense Dandakaranya forest. There, his most chaste and virtuous wife Sita was abducted by the evil-hearted and wicked Ravana (38).

मृगयां निर्गते रामे लक्ष्मणे च हृता बलात्। रामरामेति क्रोशन्ती श्रुत्वा गृध्रः प्रतापवान्।। 39।।
जटायुर्नाम पक्षीन्द्रो युद्धं कृत्वा सुदारुणम्। रावणेन हतो वीरो राघवार्थं महाबलः।। 40।।

mṛgayāṃ nirgate rāme lakṣmaṇe ca hṛtā balāt /
rāmarāmeti krośantī śrutvā gṛdhraḥ pratāpavān //
jaṭāyurnāma pakṣīndro yuddhaṃ kṛtvā sudāruṇam /
rāvaṇena hato vīro rāghavārthaṃ mahābalaḥ //

When Sri Ram and Laxman had gone to hunt a deer, he forcefully took her away (pretending to be a mendicant). At that time, she wept and cried aloud, gravely lamenting most woefully 'Oh Ram'. Hearing her pitiful lamentations, the valorous and most valiant vulture (39) Jatau, the king of birds, fought a fierce battle with Ravana to the best of his ability on behalf of Sri Ram. But at last, that brave and most strong (Jatau) was killed at the hands of Ravana (40).

रामेण दग्धो रामस्य सायुज्यमगमत्क्षणात्। रामः सुग्रीवमासाद्य सख्यं कृत्वाग्निसाक्षिकम्।। 41।।
सुग्रीवचोदितो हत्वा वालिनं सुदुरासदम्। राज्यं ददौ वानराणां सुग्रीवाय महाबलः।। 42।।

rāmeṇa dagdho rāmasya sāyujyamagamatkṣaṇāt /
rāmaḥ sugrīvamāsādya sakhyaṃ kṛtvāgnisākṣikam //
sugrīvacodito hatvā vālinaṃ sudurāsadam /
rājyaṃ dadau vānarāṇāṃ sugrīvāya mahābalaḥ //

Thereafter, his last rites were done by Sri Ram himself, and he

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instantly attained the supreme stature by being one with Sri Ram (by merging his soul with Lord Ram in his divine, ethereal and sublime form as the supreme and transcendental Lord of the creation). After that, Sri Ram came to Sugriv and befriended him with the sacred fire as a witness (41). Then, on the request of Sugriv (and taking pity on him), the most powerful and strong Sri Ram killed the invincible and formidable Vaali, and gave the kingdom of monkeys to Sugriv (42).

सुग्रीवः प्रेषयामास सीतायाः परिमार्गणे। अस्मान्वानरवृन्दान्वै महासत्त्वान्महाबलः।। 43।।
मासादर्वाङ्निवर्तध्वं नोचेत्प्राणान्हरामि वः। इत्याज्ञया भ्रमन्तोऽस्मिन्वने गह्वरमध्यगाः।।44।।

sugrīvaḥ preṣayāmāsa sītāyāḥ parimārgaṇe /
asmānvānaravṛndānvai mahāsattvānmahābalaḥ //
māsādarvāṅnivartadhvaṃ nocetprāṇānharāmi vaḥ /
ityājñayā bhramanto'sminvane gahvaramadhyagāḥ //

Sugriv has sent numerous most brave, strong, powerful and courageous monkeys like us in search of Sita (43), and has warned us that we must return and report back to him within a period of one month or else he would kill us (as punishment). On his orders, while roaming in the forest, we entered a deep cave (44).

गतो मासो न जानीमः सीतां वा रावणं च वा। मर्तुं प्रायोपविष्टाः स्मस्तीरे लवणवारिधेः।। 45।।
यदि जानासि हे पक्षिन्सीतां कथय नः शुभाम्। अङ्गदस्य वचः श्रुत्वा सम्पातिर्हृष्टमानसः।।46।।
उवाच मत्प्रियो भ्राता जटायुः प्लवगेश्वराः। बहुवर्षसहस्रान्ते भ्रातृवार्ता श्रुता मया।।47।।

gato māso na jānīmaḥ sītāṃ vā rāvaṇaṃ ca vā /
martuṃ prāyopaviṣṭā smastīre lavaṇavāridheḥ //
yadi jānāsi he pakṣinsītāṃ kathaya naḥ śubhām /
aṅgadasya vacaḥ śrutvā sampātirhṛṣṭamānasaḥ //
uvāca matpriyo bhrātā jaṭāyuḥ plavageśvarāḥ /
bahuvarṣasahasrānte bhrātṛvārtā śrutā mayā //

There we spent a month, but till now we have neither found out about Sita nor about Ravana. So we have decided to forsake food and water and die on the shores of this salty ocean (45). Oh great bird! If you have any information about the auspicious Sita, do tell us'.

Hearing these words of Angad, Sampati was extremely delighted in heart (46) and said 'Oh the great monkeys! Jatau was my dear brother. I have heard about my brother after a gap of many thousand years (47).

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वाक्साहाय्यं करिष्येऽहं भवतां प्लवगेश्वराः। भ्रातुः सलिलदानाय नयध्वं मां जलान्तिकम्।।48।।
पश्चात्सर्वं शुभं वक्ष्ये भवतां कार्यसिद्धये। तथेति निन्युस्ते तीरं समुद्रस्य विहङ्गमम्।।49।।

vākyasāhāyyaṃ kariṣye'haṃ bhavatāṃ plavageśvarāḥ/
bhrātuḥ saliladānāya nayadhvaṃ māṃ jalāntikam//
paścātsarvaṃ śubhaṃ vakṣye bhavatāṃ kāryasiddhaye/
tatheti ninyuste tīraṃ samudrasya vihaṅgamam//

Oh great monkeys! I shall definitely help you, but only verbally (because physically I am too old to help you with my body). Take me near water first so that I can offer him (Jatau) water for the last time as an oblation to the spirit of my (departed) brother (48). Then I shall tell you everything that will ensure success in your work'. Saying 'alright', they took Sampati to the sea shore (49).

सोऽपि तत्सलिले स्नात्वा भ्रातुर्दत्त्वा जलाञ्जलिम्। पुनः स्वस्थानमासाद्य स्थितो नीतो हरीश्वरैः।
सम्पातिः कथयामास वानरान्परिहर्षयन्।।50।।

so'pi tatsalile snātvā bhrāturdattvā jalāñjalim/
punaḥ svasthānamāsādya sthito nīto harīśvaraiḥ/
sampātiḥ kathayāmāsa vānarānpariharṣayan//

There he purified himself by bathing in the water and gave oblations (offering of water) to his dead brother. Then the monkeys took him to the previous place. Sitting there, Sampati said things that delighted the heart of the monkeys (50)—

लङ्का नाम नगर्यास्ते त्रिकूटगिरिमूर्धनि। तत्राशोकवने सीता राक्षसीभिः सुरक्षिता।।51।।
समुद्रमध्ये सा लङ्का शतयोजनदूरतः। दृश्यते मे न सन्देहः सीता च परिदृश्यते।।52।।

laṅkā nāma nagaryāste trikūṭagirimūrdhani/
tatrāśokavane sītā rākṣasībhiḥ surakṣitā//
samudramadhye sā laṅkā śatayojanadūrataḥ/
dṛśyate me na sandehaḥ sītā ca paridṛśyate//

'A city named Lanka exists on a mountain called Trikut (literally the mountain with three summits). There, Sita lives in the Ashok Van (a grove; a big garden) under the care and vigilant eyes of demonesses (51). That Lanka is appx. one hundred Yojans (roughly 800 miles) from here in the centre of the ocean (i.e. it was a large island or a small continent approximately 800 miles from the sea shore). There is no doubt about it—I can see both the city as well as Sita from here (52).

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गृध्रत्वाद्दूरदृष्टिर्मे नात्र संशयितुं क्षमम्। शतयोजनविस्तीर्णं समुद्रं यस्तु लङ्घयेत्।। 53।।
स एव जानकीं दृष्ट्वा पुनरायास्यति ध्रुवम्। अहमेव दुरात्मानं रावणं हन्तुमुत्सहे।
भ्रातुर्हन्तारमेकाकी किन्तु पक्षविवर्जितः।। 54।।

gṛdhratvāddūradṛṣṭirme nātra saṃśayituṃ kṣamam /
śatayojanavistīrṇaṃ samudraṃ yastu laṅghayet //
sa eva jānakīṃ dṛṣṭvā punarāyāsyati dhruvam /
ahameva durātmānaṃ rāvaṇaṃ hantumutsahe /
bhrāturhantāramekākī kintu pakṣavivarjitaḥ //

You should have no doubts or confusions about it. Being a vulture, my eyesight has a long range. Anyone amongst you who can leap across one hundred Yojan-wide ocean (53) can certainly go and meet (see) Janki (Sita). I am myself capable and proficient enough to single handedly kill that evil hearted and wicked Ravana, but I do not have wings now (because they had been burnt while I had tried to reach the sun in a competition with my brother when we were young) (54).

यतध्वमतियत्नेन लङ्घितुं सरितां पतिम्। ततो हन्ता रघुश्रेष्ठो रावणं राक्षसाधिपम्।। 55।।
उल्लङ्घ्य सिन्धुं शतयोजनायतं लङ्कां प्रविश्याथ विदेहकन्यकाम्।
दृष्ट्वा समाभाष्य च वारिधिं पुनस्तर्तुं समर्थः कतमो विचार्यताम्।।56।।

yatadhvamatiyatnena laṅghituṃ saratāṃ patim /
tato hantā raghuśreṣṭho rāvaṇaṃ rākṣasādhipam //
ullaṅghya sindhuṃ śatayojanāyataṃ
laṅkāṃ praviśyātha videhakanyakām /
dṛṣṭvā samābhāṣya ca vāridhiṃ punastartuṃ
samarthaḥ katamo vicāryatām //

You should try to leap across the ocean somehow. Then the king of demons, Ravana, will be slayed by the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) himself (55). You should discuss and find out amongst yourself who is able to cross this hundred Yojan wide ocean, see and meet the daughter of king Videha (Sita), talk with her, and then cross the ocean again to come back here' (56).

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Kishkindha Kand — Canto 8

Sampati's story; Embryology; The cause and path taken for a creature's re-birth

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

अथ ते कौतूकाविष्टाः सम्पातिं सर्ववानराः। पप्रच्छुर्भगवन् ब्रूहि स्वमुदन्तं त्वमादितः।।1।।
सम्पातिः कथयामास स्ववृत्तान्तं पुरा कृतम्। अहं पुरा जटायुश्च भ्रातरौ रूढयौवनौ।।2।।
बलेन दर्पितावावां बलजिज्ञासया खगौ। सूर्यमण्डलपर्यन्तं गन्तुमुत्पतितौ मदात्।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

atha te kautukāviṣṭāḥ sampātiṃ sarvavānarāḥ /
papracchurbhagavan brūhi svamudantaṃ tvamāditaḥ //
sampātiḥ kathayāmāsa svavṛttāntaṃ purā kṛtam /
ahaṃ purā jaṭāyuśca bhrātarau rūḍhayauvanau //
balena darpitāvāvāṃ balajijñāsayā khagau /
sūryamaṇḍalaparyantaṃ gantumutpatitau madāt //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Hearing this, the monkeys were thrilled with wonder and curiosity and asked Sampati, 'Oh Bhagwan (Lord)! Tell us about yourself from the beginning' (1).

Then Sampati told them details of all his previous deeds as they had happened in his earlier life. 'In some previous time, when I and brother Jatau were young and youthful (2), we were very proud of our strength. In order to measure it, we flew high up in the sky towards the sun and its environs (3).

बहुयोजनसाहस्रं गतौ तत्र प्रतापितः। जटायुस्तं परित्रातुं पक्षैराच्छाद्य मोहतः।।4।।
स्थितोऽहं रश्मिभिर्दग्धपक्षोऽस्मिन्विन्ध्यमूर्धनि। पतितो दूरपतनान्मूर्च्छितोऽहं कपीश्वराः।।5।।
दिनत्रयात्पुनः प्राणसहितो दग्धपक्षकः। देशं वा गिरिकूटान्वा न जाने भ्रान्तमानसः।।6।।

bahuyojanasāhasraṃ gatau tatra pratāpitaḥ /
jaṭāyustaṃ paritrātuṃ pakṣairācchādya mohataḥ //
sthito'haṃ raśmibhirdagdhapakṣo'sminvindhyamūrdhani /
patito dūrapatanānmurcchito'haṃ kapīśvarāḥ //
dinatrayātpunaḥ prāṇasahito dagdhapakṣakaḥ /
deśaṃ vā girikūṭānvā na jāne bhrāntamānasaḥ //

When we had gone to a height of many thousand Yojans (miles),

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Jatau began to get scorched (due to the heat of the sun). In order to protect him from being burnt, out of affection for him, I spread my large wings over him like an umbrella (4). At last, when my wings were burnt due to the rays of the sun, I fell down here on the summit of Mt. Vindhyachal. Since I fell from a great height, I became unconscious (5). When I regained consciousness after three days, I was completely disoriented and confused as to what country or mountain top it was (i.e. I was so shocked and confounded that I did not know where I was; I could not gather bearings about my location because I was very stunned) (6).

शनैरुन्मील्य नयने दृष्ट्वा तत्राश्रमं शुभम्। शनैः शनैराश्रमस्य समीपं गतवानहम्।। 7।।
चन्द्रमा नाम मुनिराड् दृष्ट्वा मां विस्मितोऽवदत्।
सम्पाते किमिदं तेऽद्य विरूपं केन वा कृतम्।।8।।
जानामि त्वामहं पूर्वमत्यन्तं बलवानसि। दग्धौ किमर्थं ते पक्षौ कथ्यतां यदि मन्यसे।।9।।

śanairunmīlya nayane dṛṣṭvā tatrāśramaṃ śubham /
śanaiḥ śanairāśramasya samīpaṃ gatavānaham //
candramā nāma munirāḍ dṛṣṭvā māṃ vismito'vadat /
sampāte kimidaṃ te'dya virūpaṃ kena va kṛtam //
jānāmi tvāmahaṃ pūrvamatyantaṃ balavānasi /
dagdhau kimarthaṃ te pakṣau kathyatāṃ yadi manyase //

Gradually, when I opened my eyes and looked around, I saw an auspicious and lovely hermitage nearby. I slowly limped to that hermitage (7). In it lived a great sage named Chandrama. When he saw me, he was most surprised and asked me, 'Oh Sampati! What is this, who has deformed you today? (8). I know you since long; you are very strong and robust—then how come your wings have been burnt? If you think proper, tell the whole episode to me' (9).

ततः स्वचेष्टितं सर्वं कथयित्वातिदुःखितः। अब्रवं मुनिशार्दूलं दह्येऽहं दाववह्निना।। 10।।
कथं धारयितुं शक्तो विपक्षो जीवितं प्रभो। इत्युक्तोऽथ मुनिर्वीक्ष्य मां दयार्द्रविलोचनः।।11।।

tataḥ svaceṣṭitaṃ sarvaṃ kathayitvātiduḥkhitaḥ /
abravaṃ muniśārdūla dahye'haṃ dāvavahninā //
kathaṃ dhārayituṃ śakto vipakṣo jīvitaṃ prabho /
ityukto'tha munirvīkṣya māṃ dayārdravilocanaḥ //

Then I told that sage, who was like a tiger amongst sages (i.e. most exalted), all about my haughty, reckless and arrogant deeds. I said to

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him very remorsefully and full of gloom, 'Now I shall burn myself in a great fire (10). Oh Lord! How can I survive now without my wings?'

Hearing my lamentation and remorseful words full of dismay, the sage felt very compassionate and pitiful, and he said to me with merciful eyes full of tears (11)—

श्रृणु वत्स वचो मेऽद्य श्रुत्वा कुरु यथेप्सितम्। देहमूलमिदं दुःखं देहः कर्मसमुद्भवः।। 12।।
कर्म प्रवर्तते देहेऽहंबुद्ध्या पुरुषस्य हि। अहङ्कारस्त्वनादिः स्यादविद्यासम्भवो जडः।। 13।।

śṛṇu vatsa vaco me'dya śrutvā kuru yathepsitam /
dehamūlamidaṃ duḥkhaṃ dehaḥ karmasamudbhavaḥ //
karma pravartate dehe'haṃbuddhyā puruṣasya hi /
ahaṅkārastvanādiḥ syādavidyāsambhavo jaḍaḥ //

'Oh son! Listen to me; after that, do as you please. The cause of all sorrows is the body, as the body is involved in doing various deeds (12).

When a person is involved/associated with the body (i.e. is egoistically attached to it, thinking that he has a strong, beautiful body, capable of doing such and such thing), he is instigated (inspired, motivated, impelled) to initiate various actions or deeds. And this sense of haughtiness, arrogance, ego and pride, called Ahankar (of having this able, handsome, robust and strong body capable of doing so many great things) is most ancient and present from the beginning of creation. It has its origin in Avidya, which is ignorance of the grossest kind, creating lack of true wisdom and correct insight into the actual reality and truthful substance of any thing or situation (13).

चिच्छायया सदा युक्तस्तप्तायः पिण्डवत्सदा। तेन देहस्य तादात्म्याद्देहश्चेतनवान्भवेत्।। 14।।
देहोऽहमिति बुद्धिः स्यादात्मनोऽहङ्कृतेर्बलात्। तन्मूल एष संसारः सुखदुःखादिसाधकः।। 15।।

cicchāyayā sadā yuktastaptāyaḥ piṇḍavatsadā /
tena dehasya tādātmyāddehaścetanavānbhavet //
deho'hamiti buddhiḥ syādātmano'haṅkṛterbalāt /
tanmūla eṣa saṃsāra sukhaduḥkhādisādhakaḥ //

Like a ball of hot iron has heat uniformly diffused throughout it and present in a latent form in it as its inseparable, integral and intrinsic part, lending it its special identity and characteristic, the pure consciousness is also present imperceptibly and inherently in the element called Ahankar (ego, pride, haughtiness and arrogance) which

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characterizes and calibrates a creature's mental setup, temperament, inclinations, behaviours, responses and actions in this world. When the pure consciousness, surrounded by Ahankar, gets associated and involved with the body, the latter also appears to exhibit consciousness (life, vitality) as well as Ahankar as its characteristic features[1] (14).

It is because of this 'consciousness surrounded by Ahankar' that the Atma (pure self or consciousness) gets the erroneous thought (feeling, conception or perception) that 'it is the body'. And it is because of this (association of pure consciousness or Atma with the inanimate, inert and separate gross entity called the body along with the virtue called Ahankar) that one gets involved in this world of birth and death along with its incumbent joys and sorrows[2] (15).

[Note—[1]In other words, the creature, whose truthful identity is the pure consciousness or Atma and not the gross body, falsely thinks, under the influence of ignorance created delusions, that it is identified by its body, that it has a body that possesses such and such stupendous potentials and powers, that it is so beautiful, powerful, strong and robust, and that it is capable of doing magnificent deeds and achieving stupendous successes. This fills the creature with ego and pride pertaining to the body and its potentials and powers. The creature becomes arrogant and haughty, is filled with hypocrisy and vanity—collectively called Ahankar. This latter Ahankar completely surrounds the consciousness and corrupts it even as a transparent veil over a source of light changes its colour and other basic characteristics.

[2]That is, when the pure conscious Atma thinks that it has a body, it becomes proud of its potentials and then allows itself to do so many deeds, which create so many results in their wake. The creature gets sucked in the vortex of the sequence of events that is created, resulting in an endless cycle of deeds and their incumbent rewards and punishments. On the contrary, if the creature is free from the deluding effects of ignorance and realises that its pure self is the Atma which is pure consciousness and not the body, and that the body is not only perishable but also a cause of pain and sorrows, it would become dispassionate and indifferent towards this body and the external world with which the body interacts. For all practical purposes, the world would cease to exist for such an enlightened and wise man.]

आत्मनो निर्विकारस्य मिथ्या तादात्म्यतः सदा। देहोऽहं कर्मकर्ताहमिति सङ्कल्प्य सर्वदा॥ 16॥
जीवः करोति कर्माणि तत्फलैर्बद्ध्यतेऽवशः। ऊर्ध्वाधो भ्रमते नित्यं पापपुण्यात्मकः स्वयम्॥17॥

ātmano nirvikārasya mithyā tādātmyataḥ sadā/
deho'haṃ karmakartāhamiti saṅkalpya sarvadā//

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jīvaḥ karoti karmāṇi tatphalairbaddhyate'vaśaḥ /
ūrdhvādho bhramate nityaṃ pāpapuṇyātmakaḥ svayam //

This association that the Atma—which is fundamentally without any faults and blemishes, is limitless, is changeless and eternal, is beyond reproach, and is powerful and majestic—has with the body, is false, erroneous, misleading and illusionary. But nevertheless it makes the Jiva (creature) believe that 'I am the body and the doer of deeds', as a result of which he always (16) involves himself (by implication) in doing various deeds and gets consequentially tied to their respective rewards (good or bad results).

In this manner, under the influence and the cumulative effects of the bad and good deeds done by it, the creature ignorantly keeps on roaming aimlessly and interminably, with no end in sight, in various high and low wombs (i.e. keeps on taking birth eternally in different types of forms such as insects, animals, birds or humans) (17).

कृतं मयाधिकं पुण्यं यज्ञदानादि निश्चितम्। स्वर्गं गत्वा सुखं भोक्ष्य इति सङ्कल्पवान्भवेत्।। 18।।
तथैवाध्यासतस्तत्र चिरं भुक्त्वा सुखं महत्। क्षीणपुण्यः पतत्यर्वागनिच्छन्कर्मचोदितः।।19।।

kṛtaṃ mayādhikaṃ puṇyaṃ yajñadānādi niścitam /
svargaṃ gatvā sukhaṃ bhokṣya iti saṅkalpavānbhavet //
tathaivādhyāsatastatra ciraṃ bhuktvā sukhaṃ mahat /
kṣīṇapuṇyaḥ patatyarvāganicchankarmacoditaḥ //

He begins to feel reassured that he has done such and such 'Yagya' (religious fire sacrifices and other rituals), 'Daan' (charities/giving of alms) and other many good and virtuous deeds; hence he shall surely go to the heaven and enjoy heavenly comforts (18).

By the good effect of this aspect of his life, he indeed goes to heaven, enjoys comforts and joys for a long time. But when the effects wears off, he has to fall back to the lower level (from which he had risen to the heaven) because of his past inherent inclinations and tendencies which impel him to repeat those actions that had provided him the comforts of the heaven. The creature falls back even against its will because of the force of its basic nature and inclinations as well as its past deeds that compel it to remain gridlocked in this world (19).

पतित्वा मण्डले चेन्दोस्ततो नीहारसंयुतः। भूमौ पतित्वा व्रीह्यादौ तत्र स्थित्वा चिरं पुनः।। 20।।
भूत्वा चतुर्विधं भोज्यं पुरुषैर्भुज्यते ततः। रेतो भूत्वा पुनस्तेन ऋतौ स्त्रीयोनिसिञ्चितः।।21।।

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patitvā maṇḍale cendostato nīhārasaṃyutaḥ /
bhūmau patitvā vrīhyādau tatra sthitvā ciraṃ punaḥ //
bhūtvā caturvidhaṃ bhojyaṃ puruṣairbhujyate tataḥ /
reto bhūtvā punastena ṛtau strīyonisiñcitaḥ //

[Now the path taken after fall from the heaven is traced.]

First he falls on the moon. From there, riding piggyback on the rays of the moon, he falls along with dew drops (or mist, fog) on the earth and remains lodged for a long time, planted in the cereals such as 'Vrihi' (a special type of rice/paddy) (20). Then the fallen creature's atomic and microscopic form finds its way in the body of those who eat those cereals. The entry in the body takes four basic life forms.[1] It is then converted to sperms of males and transferred to the womb of a female during the intercourse session (21).

[Note :—The four ways in which the 'fallen creature' enters the human body are—(i) Bhakṣa—भक्ष that which is eaten by tearing and lacerating with the help of teeth e.g., bread, chewing of sugarcane; (ii) Bhojya—भोज्य that which is cooked and eaten with fingers or spoons e.g., rice, curry; (iii) Lehya—लेह्य that which is licked e.g., eating pickles or honey; and (iv) Choshya—चोषय that which is sucked e.g., water, milk.]

योनिरक्तेन संयुक्तं जरायुपरिवेष्टितम्। दिनेनैकेन कललं भूत्वा रूढत्वमाप्नुयात्।। 22।।
तत्पुनः पञ्चरात्रेण बुद्बुदाकारतामियात्। सप्तरात्रेण तदपि मांसपेशित्वमाप्नुयात्।। 23।।

yoniraktena saṃyuktaṃ jarāyuparivesṭitam /
dinenaikena kalalaṃ bhūtvā rūḍhatvamāpnuyāt //
tatpunaḥ pañcarātreṇa budbudākāratāmiyāt /
saptarātreṇa tadapi māṃsapeśitvamāpnuyāt //

Mixed with the fluids and blood of the womb, it is transformed into a soft slushy mass of salty mud enclosed by a thin membranous tissue within one day (22). Then in five nights, it develops into a bubble shaped mass of jelly having minute bubbles on its surface. After seven nights, it becomes round like a bundle of muscles (i.e. the embryo becomes denser and begins to solidify into an egg-shaped entity) (23).

पक्षमात्रेण सा पेशी रुधिरेण परिप्लुता। तस्या एवाङ्कुरोत्पत्तिः पञ्चविंशतिरात्रिषु।। 24।।
ग्रीवा शिरश्च स्कन्धश्च पृष्ठवंशस्तथोदरम्। पञ्चधाङ्गानि चैकैकं जायन्ते मासतः क्रमात्।।25।।

pakṣamātreṇa sā peśī rudhireṇa pariplutā /
tasyā evāṅkurotpattiḥ pañcaviṃśatirātriṣu //

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grīvā śiraśca skandhaśca pṛṣṭhavaṃśastathodaram /
pañcadhāṅgāni caikaikaṃ jāyante māsataḥ kramāt //

Within fifteen days, blood fills (i.e. seeps into) that muscular ball, and after twenty five nights it begins to produce sprouts (i.e. the various organs begin to delineate and mark themselves in that cheesy mass) (24). When one month is complete, the following five organs would have appeared in it, one by one—neck, head, shoulders, spine and stomach respectively (25).

पाणिपादौ तथा पार्श्वः कटिर्जानु तथैव च। मासद्वयात्प्रजायन्ते क्रमेणैव न चान्यथा।। 26।।
त्रिभिर्मासैः प्रजायन्ते अङ्गानां सन्धयः क्रमात्। सर्वाङ्गुल्यः प्रजायन्ते क्रमान्मासचतुष्टये।। 27।।

pāṇipādau tathā pārśvaḥ kaṭirjānu tathaiva ca /
māsadvayātprajāyante krameṇaiva na cānyathā //
tribhirmāsaiḥ prajāyante aṅgānāṃ sandhayaḥ kramāt /
sarvāṅgulyaḥ prajāyante kramānmāsacatuṣṭaye //

Then in about two months time, the hands and the legs, ribs, waist and knees would have been completed, one by one. There is no deviation in this sequence (26). Next in this series, by the end of three months are formed the joints, and thereafter, on the completion of four months, all the fingers emerge (27).

नासा कर्णौ च नेत्रे च जायन्ते पञ्चमासतः। दन्तपंक्तिर्नखा गुह्यं पञ्चमे जायते तथा।। 28।।
अर्वाक्षण्मासतश्छिद्रं कर्णयोर्भवति स्फुटम्। पायुर्मेढमुपस्थं च नाभिश्चापि भवेन्नृणाम्।।29।।
सप्तमे मासि रोमाणि शिरः केशास्तथैव च। विभक्तावयवत्वं च सर्वं सम्पद्यतेऽष्टमे।।30।।

nāsā karṇau ca netre ca jāyante pañcamāsataḥ /
dantapaṅktirnakhā guhyaṃ pañcame jāyate tathā //
arvākṣaṇmāsataśchidraṃ karṇayorbhavati sphuṭam /
pāyurmeḍhamupasthaṃ ca nābhiścāpi bhavennṛṇām //
saptame māsi romāṇi śiraḥ keśāstathaiva ca /
vibhaktāvayavatvaṃ ca sarvaṃ sampadyate'ṣṭame //

At the beginning of the 5th month, nose, ears and eyes are formed, while during this month are formed the teeth, nails and internal organs (28). At the beginning of the 6th month, the cavities of the ears become evident, besides the anus, the sex organs (male or female) and the navel (29). During the 7th month, hairs of the body and the head emerge, while in the 8th month all the organs would have been formed and separately/distinctly visible (30).

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जठरे वर्धते गर्भः स्त्रिया एवं विहङ्गम। पञ्चमे मासि चैतन्यं जीवः प्राप्नोति सर्वशः।। 31।।
नाभिसूत्रात्परन्ध्रेण मातृभुक्तान्नसारतः। वर्धते गर्भगः पिण्डो न म्रियेत स्वकर्मतः।। 32।।

jaṭhare vardhate garbhaḥ strīyā evaṃ vihaṅgama /
pañcame māsi caitanyaṃ jīvaḥ prāpnoti sarvaśaḥ //
nābhisutrālparandhreṇa mātṛbhuktānnasārataḥ /
vardhate garbhagaḥ piṇḍo na mriyeta svakarmataḥ //

Oh bird! This is how the foetus develops in the womb of the woman. During the 5th month itself, the foetus gains consciousness (vital signs of life) (31). The embryo in the womb draws nourishment by way of food eaten by the mother through the thin, minute cord-like filament (i.e. the umbilical cord) attached to the embryo's navel, and it grows as a result. It does not die because of its past deeds (i.e. as a result or effect or reward or reaction of the actions done by it in previous life before it fell down from the heaven as described in verse no. 19) (32).

[Note :—Verse nos. 21-32 deal with the science of embryology.]

स्मृत्वा सर्वाणि जन्मानि पूर्वकर्माणि सर्वशः। जठरानलतप्तोऽयमिदं वचनमब्रवीत्।। 33।।
नानायोनिसहस्रेषु जायमानोऽनुभूतवान्। पुत्रदारादिसम्बन्धं कोटिशः पशुबान्धवान्।। 34।।

smṛtvā sarvāṇi janmāni pūrvakarmāṇi sarvaśaḥ /
jaṭharānalatapto'yamidaṃ vacanamabravīt //
nānāyonisahasreṣu jāyamāno'nubhūtavān /
putradārādisambandhaṃ koṭiśaḥ paśubāndhavān //

At that moment (in the womb), remembering all its previous lives and deeds done during those births, and tormented by the fire (horrible agonies) of the womb, the creature says (33), 'Having taken birth in crores (multiples) of previous wombs, I have had the experience of having various worldly relationships such as kith and kin, friends and compatriots, sons and wives etc. on uncountable number of occasions in different life forms that I had to take, including as animals (34).

कुटुम्बभरणासक्त्या न्यायान्यायैर्धनार्जनम्। कृतं नाकरवं विष्णुचिन्तां स्वप्नेऽपि दुर्भगः।। 35।।
इदानीं तत्फलं भुञ्जे गर्भदुःखं महत्तरम्। अशाश्वते शाश्वतवद्देहे तृष्णासमन्वितः।। 36।।

kuṭumbabharaṇāsaktyā nyāyānyāyairdhanārjanam /
kṛtaṃ nākaravaṃ viṣṇucintāṃ svapne'pi durbhagaḥ //

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idānīṃ tatphalaṃ bhuñje garbhaduḥkhaṃ mahattaram /
aśāśvate śāśvatavaddehe tṛṣṇāsamanvitaḥ //

The most unfortunate fellow that I am, I never remembered Lord Vishnu (i.e. the supreme Lord) even in my dreams at that time. I was simply engrossed and remained busily involved in sustaining (or looking after; feeding) my worldly relations and my kith and kin; I spent my time and energy to earn wealth for them either by right or wrong means (35).

As a result of this misplaced priority, I am suffering from this severe punishment in the form of horrifying torments of the womb, and once again I mistakenly regard this perishable body as eternal, imperishable and truthful, and am getting tied or ensnared willingly in its ever wistful, yearning and desiring nature that would never end (36).

अकार्याण्येव कृतवान्न कृतं हितमात्मनः। इत्येवं बहुधा दुःखमनुभूय स्वकर्मतः।। 37।।
कदा निष्क्रमणं मे स्याद्गर्भान्निरयसन्निभात्। इत ऊर्ध्वं नित्यमहं विष्णुमेवानुपूजये।। 38।।

akāryāṇyeva kṛtavānna kṛtaṃ hitamātmanaḥ /
ityevaṃ bahudhā duḥkhamanubhūya svakarmataḥ //
kadā niṣkramaṇaṃ me syādgarbhānnirayasannibhāt /
ita ūrdhvaṃ nityamahaṃ viṣṇumevānupūjaye //

I had buried myself in the past in doing what was not worthy of being done, and did not attempt to do anything that truly served my own well-beings and welfare. Hence, based on, or as a result of my own deeds, I have been suffering from numerous sorrows and interminable miseries (37). I don't know when I shall get out of this hell-like womb (which is like a dark, gloomy and suffocating cavern for me). And when I do, I shall always worship and adore, and sincerely dedicate myself to having devotion for Lord Vishnu' (38).

इत्यादि चिन्तयन् जीवो योनियन्त्रप्रपीडितः। जायमानोऽतिदुःखेन नरकात्पातकी यथा।। 39।।
पूतिव्रणान्निपतितः कृमिरेष इवापरः। ततो बाल्यादिदुःखानि सर्व एवं विभुञ्जते।। 40।।

ityādi cintayan jīvo yoniyantraprapīḍitaḥ /
jāyamāno'tiduḥkhena narakātpātakī yathā //
pūtivraṇānnipatitaḥ kṛmireṣa ivāparaḥ /
tato bālyādiduḥkhāni sarva evaṃ vibhuñjate //

Worrying, lamenting, regretting and tormented in this manner,

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that creature takes birth amidst great misery and difficulty associated with birth as if some sinful/pervert/vile person comes out from the horrible torments of hell. [The creature feels glad and relieved that he has been able to get rid of the hell-like womb at last.] (39). At that moment he looks like a maggot or a worm falling out of a festering wound. Then he has to suffer from various miseries, agonies and torments during his childhood days. Such is the miserable, dismal, pitiful and wretched condition of all those who have a body (40).

[Note :—Goswami Tulsidas has described the miseries suffered by a soul in the womb and even after birth in almost exactly similar lines in his Vinai-Patrika, verse no. 136; English version of the full text by the author is published separately.]

त्वया चैवानुभूतानि सर्वत्र विदितानि च। न वर्णितानि मे गृध्र यौवनादिषु सर्वतः।। 41।।
एवं देहोऽहमित्यस्मादभ्यासान्निरयादिकम्। गर्भवासादिदुःखानि भवन्त्यभिनिवेशतः।।42।।

tvayā caivānubhūtāni sarvatra viditāni ca /
na varṇitāni me gṛdhra yauvanādiṣu sarvataḥ //
evaṃ deho'hasmityasmādabhyāsānnirayādikam /
garbhavāsādiduḥkhāni bhavantyabhiniveśataḥ //

Oh vulture! You have yourself witnessed (seen) the other miseries and torments of youth, adulthood etc. These are known to all, so I have not described them in detail (41).

In this manner, by continuously thinking erroneously that 'I am the body' (or identifying one's pure self or the Atma with the body) and its accompanying ego and pride (that I have such a beautiful, strong, handsome, capable body), the creature has to suffer innumerable miseries, agonies and torments that are associated with living in hell and womb (i.e. by falling in the vortex of endless cycle of birth and death) (42).

तस्माद्देहद्वयादन्यमात्मानं प्रकृतेः परम्। ज्ञात्वा देहादिममतां त्यक्त्वात्मज्ञानवान् भवेत्।। 43।।
जाग्रदादिविनिर्मुक्तं सत्यज्ञानादिलक्षणम्। शुद्धं बुद्धं सदा शान्तमात्मानमवधारयेत्।।44।।

tasmāddehadvayādanyamātmānaṃ prakṛteḥ param /
jñātvā dehādimamatāṃ tyaktvātmajñānavān bhavet //
jāgradādivinirmuktaṃ satyajñānādilakṣaṇam /
śuddhaṃ buddhaṃ sadā śāntamātmānamavadhārayet //

Hence, it is expected of a person that he treats the Atma (pure self, pure consciousness, microcosmic soul) as being beyond the purview

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of 'Prakriti' (nature of a man, his behaviour, temperaments, emotions and thought processes, his natural inclination and inherent tendencies) and absolutely distinct and independent from both the subtle as well as the gross bodies1. With this enlightenment and wisdom, he should forsake all his attachments, infatuations and a sense of wistful belonging that he has with this body, and instead of it he should become rich in (i.e. acquire, become endowed or blessed with) the knowledge of the great truth about his Atma which is the true, pure, divine, sublime and supreme form of his 'truthful self'. [This realisation about the nature of the 'self' as being the Atma and not the body is called attainment of wisdom, having deep insight and obtaining enlightenment) (43).

Atma should always be treated as being free from the various stages in which a creature exists in the world, such as being 'awake' etc[2]. It should be regarded as an embodiment or image of eternal, truthful consciousness, as most pure and immaculate, as supremely enlightened and most wise, and as eternally blissful, peaceful and tranquil (44).

[Note :—(i) [1]According to the principles of Vedanta, the creature has 3 types of bodies—viz. gross, subtle and causal. The gross body consists of the five organs of perception and five organs of action, while the subtle body consists of the mind-intellect complex. The causal body harbours the Atma as the pure consciousness. The Atma is distinct from these bodies, though it has to rely upon them while residing inside the body and interacting with the external world, for a spirit cannot deal with the gross world in its pure spirit form. The very fact that it has to use these bodies as a medium implies that the Atma has a separate existence from them. (ii) [2]The various states of consciousness in which a creature lives are the state of wakefulness, the sleeping state (the dream state), the deep sleep state, and finally the blissful state or Turiya state of consciousness. A separate appendix no.2 of this book explains these concepts in detail.]

चिदात्मनि परिज्ञाते नष्टे मोहेऽज्ञसम्भवे। देहः पततु वारब्धकर्मवेगेन तिष्ठतु॥45॥
योगिनो न हि दुःखं वा सुखं वाज्ञानसम्भवम्। तस्माद्देहेन सहितो यावत्प्रारब्धसंक्षयः॥46॥
तावत्तिष्ठ सुखेन त्वं धृतकञ्चुकसर्पवत्। अन्यद्वक्ष्यामि ते पक्षिन् शृणु मे परमं हितम्॥47॥

cidātmani parijñāte naṣṭe mohe'jñasambhave /
dehaḥ patatu vārabdhakarmavegena tiṣṭhatu //
yogino na hi duḥkhaṃ vā sukhaṃ vājñānasambhavam /
tasmāddehena sahito yāvatprārabdhasaṅkṣayaḥ //

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tāvattiṣṭha sukhena tvaṃ dhṛtakañcukasarpavat /
anyadvakṣyāmi te pakṣin śṛṇu me paramaṃ hitam //

When a wise Yogi (ascetic), who has realised the true nature of the soul, becomes aware of or achieves enlightenment about the super conscious, eternal, pure, truthful, imperishable and unchangeable nature of the Atma (soul), his 'Moha' (the various delusions and misconceptions about the world and the body; the sense of attachments, infatuations, endearments, yearnings, wistfulness, desires etc. associated with them) originating from ignorance is destroyed. As a consequence, he is not troubled whether the body survives or perishes depending on his past deeds (because he stops identifying himself or his pure Atma with the gross body).

Hence, like that Yogi, you should also bear this body happily till all the accumulated effects of your past deeds are nullified (destroyed or purged) like a serpent bears his cuticle without any attachment to it. Besides this, oh bird, I shall tell you one more thing of great importance for your welfare and good (45-47).

त्रेतायुगे दाशरथिर्भूत्वा नारायणोऽव्ययः। रावणस्य वधार्थाय दण्डकानागमिष्यति।। 48 ।।
सीतया भार्यया सार्धं लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः। तत्राश्रमे जनकजां भ्रातृभ्यां रहिते वने।। 49 ।।

tretāyuge dāśarathibhūtvā nārāyaṇo'vyayaḥ /
rāvaṇasya vadhārthāya daṇḍakānāgamiṣyati //
sītayā bhāryayā sārdhaṃ lakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ /
tatrāśrame janakajāṃ bhrātṛbhyāṃ rahite vane //

During the Treta Yug (the 2nd era of the 4-era mythological cycle of creation), the imperishable Lord Narayan (Vishnu) shall incarnate (manifest, reveal) himself in the household of Dashrath, and in order to slay Ravana, he shall come to the Dandakaranya forest (48) along with his wife Sita and brother Laxman. There, the brothers shall go to the forest leaving behind the daughter of Janak (Sita) alone in the hermitage (49).

रावणश्चोरवन्नीत्वा लङ्कायां स्थापयिष्यति। तस्याः सुग्रीवनिर्देशाद्वानराः परिमार्गणे।। 50 ।।
आगमिष्यन्ति जलधेस्तीरं तत्र समागमः। त्वया तैः कारणवशाद्भविष्यति न संशयः।। 51 ।।
तदा सीतास्थितिं तेभ्यः कथयस्व यथार्थतः। तदैव तव पक्षौ द्वावुत्पत्स्येते पुनर्नवौ।। 52 ।।

rāvaṇaścoravannītvā laṅkāyāṃ sthāpayiṣyati /
tasyāḥ sugrīvanirdeśādvānarāḥ parimārgaṇe //

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āgamiṣyanti jaladhestīraṃ tatra samāgamaḥ /
tvayā taiḥ kāraṇavaśādbhaviṣyati na saṃśayaḥ //
tadā sītāsthitiṃ tebhyaḥ kathayasva yathārthataḥ /
tadaiva tava pakṣau dvāvutpatsyete punarnavau //

Then Ravana shall steal (abduct) her like a thief and keep her in Lanka. Thence, on the orders of Sugriv, some monkeys would be sent to search for her (50). They would arrive on the shore of the ocean and you will have a chance to come in contact with them. There is no doubt about it (51). At that time, you must tell them the correct location (whereabouts) of Sita. Just at this instant, you will get back (i.e. be blessed with) new wings' (52).

सम्पातिरुवाच

बोधयामास मां चन्द्रनामा मुनिकुलेश्वरः। पश्यन्तु पक्षौ मे जातौ नूतनावतिकोमलौ ।। 53 ।।
स्वस्ति वोऽस्तु गमिष्यामि सीतां द्रक्ष्यथ निश्चयम्। यत्नं कुरुध्वं दुर्लङ्घ्यसमुद्रस्य विलङ्घने ।। 54 ।।

sampātiruvāca

bodhayāmāsa māṃ candranāmā munikuleśvaraḥ /
paśyantu pakṣau me jātau nūtanāvatikomalau //
svasti vo'stu gamiṣyāmi sītāṃ drakṣyatha niścayam /
yatnaṃ kurudhvaṃ durlaṅghyasamudrasya vilaṅghane //

Sampati said—'This is how the exalted sage Chandrama consoled, reassured and explained all the things to me. (I had been waiting for this auspicious occasion for such a long time.) Look, my soft new wings have come out (i.e. re-emerged) (53).

You all be blessed! I wish to go now. There is no doubt that you will surely be able to see (meet) Sita. Just endeavour to cross this vast ocean which seems most formidable and almost impossible to leap across (54).

यन्नामस्मृतिमात्रतोऽपरिमितं संसारवारांनिधिं
तीर्त्वा गच्छति दुर्जनोऽपि परमं विष्णोः पदं शाश्वतम्।
तस्यैव स्थितिकारिणस्त्रिजगतां रामस्य भक्ताः प्रिया
यूयं किं न समुद्रमात्रतरणे शक्ताः कथं वानराः ।। 55 ।।

yannāmasmṛtimātrato'parimitaṃ saṃsāravārāṃnidhiṃ
tīrtvā gacchati durjano'pi paramaṃ viṣṇo padaṃ śāśvatam /

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tasyaiva sthitikāriṇastrījagatāṃ rāmasya bhaktāḥ priyā
yūyaṃ kiṃ na samudramātrataraṇe śaktāḥ kathaṃ vānarāḥ //

By remembering his (Sri Ram's) name even the most evil, wicked and vile ones are able to cross the measureless, vast and intractable mundane world-like ocean and attain the eternally truthful abode of Lord Vishnu (i.e. they cross this ocean-like world and reach the heavens)—you are the most fortunate and dear devotees (subordinates, followers, messengers) of the same Sri Ram who establishes, looks after and nourishes the three worlds (the celestial, terrestrial and subterranean worlds). Then, say, wouldn't you be able to cross over this lowly and humble (comparatively miniscule and inconsequential) ocean, oh monkeys?' (55).

***

Kishkindha Kand — Canto 9

Contemplating about how to cross the ocean

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

गते विहायसा गृध्रराजे वानरपुङ्गवाः। हर्षेण महताविष्टाः सीतादर्शनलालसाः।।1।।
ऊचुः समुद्रं पश्यन्तो नक्रचक्रभयङ्करम्। तरङ्गादिभिरुन्नद्धमाकाशमिव दुर्ग्रहम्।।2।।
परस्परमवोचन्वै कथमेनं तरामहे। उवाच चाङ्गदस्तत्र शृणुध्वं वानरोत्तमाः।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

gate vihāyasā gṛdhrarāje vānarapuṅgavāḥ /
harṣeṇa mahatāviṣṭāḥ sītādarśanalālasāḥ //
ūcuḥ samudraṃ paśyanto nakracakrabhayaṅkaram /
taraṅgādibhirunnaddhamākāśamiva durgraham //
parasparamavocanvai kathamenaṃ tarāmahe /
uvāca cāṅgadastatra śṛṇudhvaṃ vānarottamāḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! When the king of vultures had gone away through the path of the sky, the throng of brave monkeys, who were very eager to find out about the whereabouts of Sita, became very delighted (because they had come to know finally where she was located) (1).

But after that, when they saw the most awesome, insurmountable,

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formidable, ferocious and frightening ocean with its entrance blocked by rapidly turning, churning and swirling whirlpools, high waves, buffeting and heaving menacingly, and which was as unfathomable as the sky (2)—they wondered amongst themselves about how to cross it. Then Angad said, 'Oh the most superior and excellent monkeys! Listen (3)—

भवन्तोऽत्यन्तबलिनः शूराश्च कृतविक्रमाः। को वात्र वारिधिं तीर्त्वा राज्यकार्यं करिष्यति॥ 4॥
एतेषां वानराणां स प्राणदाता न संशयः। तदुत्तिष्ठतु मे शीघ्रं पुरतो यो महाबलः॥ 5॥

bhavantyo'tyantabalinaḥ śūrāśca kṛtavikramāḥ/
ko vātra vāridhiṃ tīrtvā rājakāryaṃ kariṣyati//
eteṣāṃ vānarāṇāṃ sa prāṇadātā na saṃśayaḥ/
taduttiṣṭhatu me śīghraṃ purato yo mahābalaḥ//

All of you are very strong, brave, courageous and powerful. Hence, say, who among you is capable to leap across the ocean and do the king's work? (4). That monkey will undoubtedly be the saviour of the life of all of us. Therefore, anyone of you who is brave, courageous and strong enough to undertake this mission should step forward and come in front of me (5).

वानराणां च सर्वेषां रामसुग्रीवयोरपि। स एव पालको भूयान्नात्र कार्या विचारणा॥ 6॥
इत्युक्ते युवराजेन तूष्णीं वानरसैनिकाः। आसन्नोचुः किञ्चिदपि परस्परविलोकिनः॥ 7॥

vānarāṇāṃ ca sarveṣāṃ rāmasugrīvayorapi/
sa eva pālako bhūyānnātra kāryā vicāraṇā//
ityukte yuvarājena tūṣṇīṃ vānarasainikāḥ/
āsannocuḥ kiñcidapi parasparavilokinaḥ//

There is no doubt that he will be the saviour of the life of all the monkeys, Sugriv as well as of Sri Ram himself' (6).

When the crown prince (Angad) had said this, all the monkey commanders sat quietly in a pensive and distraught mood, undecided and perplexed, and contemplating on what to do next. No one could speak a word. They just stared at each other blankly (in dismay and frustration) (7).

[Note :—By saying that the monkey who will be able to cross the ocean will be able to save the life of the monkeys, Angad meant that otherwise Sugriv will kill all of them (see Canto 6, verse no. 26). That monkey will be the saviour of Sugriv because otherwise he will be the victim of Sri

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Ram's wrath or he might commit suicide in disgust and shame at having failed to do Sri Ram's work. That monkey will also be the saviour of Sri Ram because otherwise the Lord will be so overwhelmed with sorrows and anguish of separation from Sita that seeing no hope of ever seeing her again, he might also end his life.]

अङ्गद उवाच

उच्यतां वै बलं सर्वैः प्रत्येकं कार्यसिद्धये। केन वा साध्यते कार्यं जानीमस्तदनन्तरम्।। 8।।
अङ्गदस्य वचः श्रुत्वा प्रोचुर्वीरा बलं पृथक्। योजनानां दशारभ्य दशोत्तरगुणं जगुः।। 9।।

aṅgada uvāca

ucyatāṃ vai balaṃ sarvaiḥ pratyekaṃ kāryasiddhaye /
kena vā sādhyate kāryaṃ jānīmastadanantaram //
aṅgadasya vacaḥ śrutvā procurvīrā balaṃ pṛthak /
yojanānāṃ daśārabhya daśottaraguṇaṃ jaguḥ //

[Seeing all the monkeys extremely perturbed and frustrated] Angad said, 'Alright. All of you tell me about your individual strength vis-ë-vis the job at hand. Then it shall be known who can accomplish this task successfully' (8).

Hearing these words of Angad, all the monkeys described their own strength separately. They told him about their ability to go from as little as ten Yojans (80 miles) to varying distances, progressively increasing in multiples of ten Yojans (9).

शतादर्वाग्जाम्बवांस्तु प्राह मध्ये वनौकसाम्। पुरा त्रिविक्रमे देवे पादं भूमानलक्षणम्।। 10।।
त्रिःसप्तकृत्वोऽहमगां प्रदक्षिणविधानतः। इदानीं वार्धकग्रस्तो न शक्नोमि विलङ्घितुम्।। 11।।

śatādarvāgjāmbavāṃstu prāha madhye vanaukasām /
purā trivikrame deve pādaṃ bhūmānalakṣaṇam //
triḥsaptakṛtvo'hamagāṃ pradakṣiṇavidhānataḥ /
idānīṃ vārdhakagrasto na śaknomi vilaṅghitum //

At last, among those monkeys, Jamvant, the bear king, said that his strength falls short of a hundred Yojans (which was the distance needed to be covered in order to land on the soil of Lanka). He said, 'In an earlier time, when the Lord had manifested himself in the form of Tibikram, I had circumambulated his feet which were equivalent in length to the dimensions (circumference) of the earth twenty one times. But old age has overcome me, and that is why I cannot leap across the ocean now' (10-11).

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अङ्गदोऽप्याह मे गन्तुं शक्यं पारं महोदधेः। पुनर्लङ्घनसामर्थ्यं न जानाम्यस्ति वा न वा।। 12।।
तमाह जाम्बवान्वीरस्त्वं राजा नो नियामकः। न युक्तं त्वां नियोक्तुं मे त्वं समर्थोऽसि यद्यपि।। 13।।

aṅgado'pyāha me gantuṃ śakyaṃ pāraṃ mahodadheḥ/
punarlaṅghanasāmarthyaṃ na jānāmyasti vā na vā//
tamāha jāmbavānvīrastvaṃ rājā no niyāmakaḥ/
na yuktaṃ tvāṃ niyoktuṃ me tvaṃ samartho'pi yadyapi//

Even Angad expressed his inability and said, 'I can go across the great ocean but I do not know (i.e. I am not certain) whether I will be able to leap back across it' (12). Then the brave Jamvant said to him, 'Oh Angad! Though you are able and proficient enough to do this work (though you underestimate your capabilities), but we do not think it appropriate to appoint you for this job because you are our leader and commander (and we can't put you to risk)' (13).

अङ्गद उवाच

एवं चेत्पूर्ववत्सर्वे स्वप्स्यामो दर्भविष्टरे। केनापि न कृतं कार्यं जीवितुं च न शक्यते।। 14।।
तमाह जाम्बवान्वीरो दर्शयिष्यामि ते सुत। येनास्माकं कार्यसिद्धिर्भविष्यत्यचिरणे च।। 15।।

aṅgada uvāca

evaṃ cetpūrvavatsarve svapsyāmo darbhaviṣṭare/
kenāpi na kṛtaṃ kāryaṃ jīvituṃ ca na śakyate//
tamāha jāmbavānvīro darśayiṣyāmi te suta/
yenāsmākaṃ kāryasiddhirbhaviṣyatyacirāṇe ca//

Angad replied, 'If this is the case, then we should adopt our earlier defiant policy of dying without food and water while lying on mats made of grass. Since this work cannot be done by anyone, then say how can we expect to live or survive' (see Canto 7, verse nos. 27-28) (14).

At this abjectly despaired and distraught mood of Angad, Jamvant consoled him and said, Oh son! The one by whose hands our work shall be done very soon, I will now show you that brave fellow' (15).

इत्युक्त्वा जाम्बवान्प्राह हनूमन्तमवस्थितम्। हनूमन्किं रहस्तूष्णीं स्थीयते कार्यगौरवे।। 16।।
प्राप्तेऽज्ञेनेव सामर्थ्यं दर्शयाद्य महाबल। त्वं साक्षाद्वायुतनयो वायुतुल्यपराक्रमः।। 17।।

ityuktvā jāmbavānprāha hanūmantamavasthitam/
hanūmankiṃ rahastūṣṇīṃ sthīyate kāryagaurave//

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prāpte'jñeneva sāmarthyaṃ darśayādya mahābala /
tvaṃ sākṣādvāyutanayo vāyutulyaparākramaḥ //

Saying this, Jamvant said to Hanuman who was sitting nearby, 'Oh Hanuman! When this great work of honour and fame has presented itself before you, why are you sitting silently (16) as if you are unaware of anything? Oh the brave and immensely valorous and valiant one! You are the son of the Wind God himself, and as famed and renowned in valour and strength as him. Hence, show your prowess, ability, agility, might, power, skill and proficiency today because the opportunity has arrived (17).

रामकार्यार्थमेव त्वं जनितोऽसि महात्मना। जातमात्रेण ते पूर्वं दृष्ट्वोद्यन्तं विभावसुम्।। 18।।
पक्वं फलं जिघृक्षामीत्युत्प्लुतं बालचेष्टया। योजनानां पञ्चशतं पतितोऽसि ततो भुवि।। 19।।

rāmakāryārthameva tvaṃ janito'si mahātmanā /
jātamātreṇa te pūrvaṃ dṛṣṭvodyantaṃ vibhāvasum //
pakvaṃ phalaṃ jighṛkṣāmītyutplutaṃ bālaceṣṭayā /
yojanānāṃ pañcaśataṃ patito'si tato bhuvi //

The great Wind God has produced you (i.e. given birth to you) precisely to do the work of Sri Ram. At the time of your birth, seeing the early morning rising sun and thinking it to be a ripe fruit, you had leapt five hundred Yojans (8 × 500 = 4000 miles) in the sky to grab it as part of your childhood playful activity, and had fallen back on the earth after that great leap (18-19).

अतस्त्वद्बलमाहात्म्यं को वा शक्नोति वर्णितुम्। उत्तिष्ठ कुरु रामस्य कार्यं नः पाहि सुव्रत।। 20।।
श्रुत्वा जाम्बवतो वाक्यं हनूमानतिहर्षितः। चकार नादं सिंहस्य ब्रह्माण्डं स्फोटयन्निव।। 21।।

atastvadbalamāhātmyaṃ ko vā śaknoti varṇitum /
uttiṣṭha kuru rāmasya kāryaṃ naḥ pāhi suvrata //
śrutvā jāmbavato vākyaṃ hanūmānatiharṣitaḥ /
cakāra nādaṃ siṃhasya brahmāṇḍaṃ sphoṭayanniva //

Therefore, who is there who can ever describe your strength, valour, courage and bravery? Oh the righteous and noble one! Stand up and come to the front. Do this job of Sri Ram and be the protector of our lives' (20).

Hearing these encouraging and inspiring words of Jamvant, Hanuman was delighted and felt very pleased. He roared like a lion, and his shrill cry shook the universe (21).

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बभूव पर्वताकारस्त्रिविक्रम इवापरः। लङ्घयित्वा जलनिधिं कृत्वा लङ्कां च भस्मसात्।। 22।।
रावणं सकुलं हत्वानेष्ये जनकनन्दिनीम्। यद्वा बद्ध्वा गले रज्ज्वा रावणं वामपाणिना।।23।।
लङ्कां सपर्वतां धृत्वा रामस्याग्रे क्षिपाम्यहम्। यद्वा दृष्ट्वैव यास्यामि जानकीं शुभलक्षणाम्।।24।।

babhūva parvatākārastrivikrama ivāparaḥ /
laṅghayitvā jalanidhiṃ kṛtvā laṅkāṃ ca bhasmasāt //
rāvaṇaṃ sakulaṃ hatvāneṣye janakanandinīm /
yadvā baddhvā gale rajjvā rāvaṇaṃ vāmapāṇinā //
laṅkāṃ saparvatāṃ dhṛtvā rāmasyāgre kṣipāmyaham /
yadvā dṛṣṭvaiva yāsyāmi jānakīṃ śubhalakṣaṇām //

He became colossus like a huge mountain as if he were a second Lord Trivikram himself (see verse nos. 10-11). Then he said to Jamvant, 'I will leap across the ocean and burn Lanka to ashes (22), kill Ravana along with his kin and other clan members, and bring the daughter of Janak (Sita). Or, if you say, I shall tie Ravana with a rope around his neck, and lift Lanka together with Mt. Trikoot on which it is situated (much like the city of Rome) in my left hand and put it in front of Sri Ram. Or should I come back after just meeting and seeing the auspicious Janki?' (24).

श्रुत्वा हनुमतो वाक्यं जाम्बवानिदमब्रवीत्। दृष्ट्वैवागच्छ भद्रं ते जीवन्तीं जानकीं शुभाम्।। 25।।
पश्चाद्रामेण सहितो दर्शयिष्यसि पौरुषम्। कल्याणं भवताद्भद्र गच्छतस्ते विहायसा।।26।।

śrutvā hanumato vākyaṃ jāmbavānidamabravīt /
dṛṣṭvaivāgaccha bhadraṃ te jīvantīṃ jānakīṃ śubhām //
paścādrāmeṇa sahito darśayiṣyasi pauruṣam /
kalyāṇaṃ bhavatādbhadra gacchataste vihāyasā //

Hearing these words of Hanuman, Jamvant said, 'Oh the blessed one! You just go and see that the auspicious Janki (Sita) is alive and come back (25). Then you can go along with Sri Ram and showcase your strength, bravery and courage, valour and valiance. Let you be blessed and have all welfares while you go by the path of the sky (26).

गच्छन्तं रामकार्यार्थं वायुस्त्वामनुगच्छतु। इत्याशीर्भिः समामन्त्र्य विसृष्टः प्लवगाधिपैः।। 27।।
महेन्द्राद्रिशिरो गत्वा बभूवाद्भुतदर्शनः।।28।।

gacchantaṃ rāmakāryārthaṃ vāyustvāmanugacchatu /
ityāśīrbhiḥ samāmantrya visṛṣṭaḥ plavagādhipaiḥ //
mahendrādriśiro gatvā babhūvādbhutadarśanaḥ //

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Let the wind follow you in your wake while you are on your way to do Sri Ram's work'.

In this manner, when Hanuman was thus honoured and blessed by all the ministers and commanders of the monkeys and bidden farewell by them (27), he went and stood atop the summit of Mt. Mahendra. There he assumed a stupendously majestic, most strange and mysterious, and very awe-inspiring and formidably colossus form (28).

महानगेन्द्रप्रतिमो महात्मा सुवर्णवर्णोऽरुणचारुवक्त्रः।
महाफणीन्द्राभसुदीर्घबाहुर्वातात्मजोऽदृश्यत सर्वभूतैः॥29॥

mahānagendrapratimo mahātmā suvarṇavarṇo'ruṇacāruvaktraḥ/
mahāphaṇīndrābhasudīrghabāhurvātātmajo'dṛśyata sarvabhūtaiḥ//

At that time, all the creatures of this world saw Hanuman, the son of the Wind God, as a mountain-like colossus with a countenance and complexion resembling the radiance of molten gold with a reddish hue (like the colour and shade of the rising sun in the morning or red hot liquid gold) and having long arms resembling the great legendary serpent (29).

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SUNDAR KAND

Sundar Kand — Canto 1

Hanuman's leap across the ocean and entry into Lanka

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

शतयोजनविस्तीर्णं समुद्रं मकरालयम्। लिलङ्घयिषुरानन्दसन्दोहो मारुतात्मजः।।1।।
ध्यात्वा रामं परात्मानमिदं वचनमब्रवीत्। पश्यन्तु वानराः सर्वे गच्छन्तं मां विहायसा।।2।।
अमोघं रामनिर्मुक्तं महाबाणमिवाखिलाः। पश्याम्यद्यैव रामस्य पत्नीं जनकनन्दिनीम्।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

śatayojanavistīrṇaṃ samudraṃ makarālayam /
lilaṅghayiṣurānandasandoho mārutātmajaḥ //
dhyātvā rāmaṃ parātmānamidaṃ vacanamabravīt /
paśyantu vānarāḥ sarve gacchantaṃ māṃ vihāyasā //
amoghaṃ rāmanirmuktaṃ mahābāṇamivākhilāḥ /
paśyāmyadyaiva rāmasya patnīṃ janakanandinīm //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! The son of the Wind God, who is an embodiment of happiness and bliss, got ready to leap across the hundred Yojan (800 miles) wide ocean which was full of alligators and other fierce marine creatures (1). He remembered and invoked Sri Ram and said, 'Oh monkeys! All of you look here. I am going through the path of the sky (2) like the infallible, invincible, irrevocable and formidable arrow shot by Sri Ram. I shall see Sri Ram's wife, the daughter of Janak ('Janak Nandani', i.e. Sita) today itself (3).

कृतार्थोऽहं कृतार्थोऽहं पुनः पश्यामि राघवम्। प्राणप्रयाणसमये यस्य नाम सकृत्स्मरन्।।4।।
नरस्तीर्त्वा भवाम्भोधिमपारं याति तत्पदम्। किं पुनस्तस्य दूतोऽहं तदङ्गाङ्गुलिमुद्रिकः।।5।।

kṛtārthohaṃ kṛtārthohaṃ punaḥ paśyāmi rāghavam /
prāṇaprayāṇasamaye yasya nāma sakṛtsmaran //
narastīrtvā bhavāmbhodhimapāraṃ yāti tatpadam /
kiṃ punastasya dūto'haṃ tadaṅgāṅgulimudrika //

I am greatly privileged (at being selected to do the great work of Sri Ram) and am certain to accomplish the task successfully before

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having Darshan (meeting and having a divine view) of Sri Ram again. At the time when the soul leaves this body and departs, the mere auspicious remembrance of his holy and divine name (4) can enable a person to cross the measureless and fathomless ocean-like mundane world and attain the exalted stature of the Lord's supreme abode (i.e. attain liberation and deliverance from the trapping snares of this world, and find emancipation and salvation for his soul). Then say, I am his messenger carrying his finger ring on his behalf as a token for Sita (so is there any doubt that I would be able to get across?) (5).

तमेव हृदये ध्यात्वा लङ्घयाम्यल्पवारिधिम्। इत्युक्त्वा हनुमान्बाहू प्रसार्यायतवालधिः ।।6।।
ऋजुग्रीवोर्ध्वदृष्टिः सन्नाकुञ्चितपदद्वयः। दक्षिणाभिमुखस्तूर्णं पुप्लुवेऽनिलविक्रमः ।।7।।

tameva hṛdaye dhyātvā laṅghyāmyalpavāridhim /
ityuktvā hanumānbāhū prasāryāyatavāladhiḥ //
ṛjugrīvordhvadṛṣṭiḥ sannākuñcitapadadvayaḥ /
dakṣiṇābhimukhastūrṇaṃ pupluve'nilavikramaḥ //

Say, what is the wonder if I cross this miniscule ocean (as compared to the huge 'Bhavsagar', or the formidable ocean representing this world which the soul crosses at the time of death) by remembering and invoking him (Sri Ram) in my heart'.

Saying this, Hanuman spread his arms wide, elongated and stiffened his tail (6), straightened his neck and looked upwards, folded both his legs in, and facing south, he launched himself and flew with the speed of wind (7).

[Note :—Careful reading of these 2 verse nos. 6-7 show that Hanuman had assumed this posture according to the principles of aerodynamics so that he could cruise smoothly through the sky like a super-sonic air-plane when he took to the skies—extended arms, lifted tail, head thrust forward, legs drawn in et-al.]

आकाशात्त्वरितं देवैर्वीक्ष्यमाणो जगाम सः। दृष्ट्वानिलसुतं देवा गच्छन्तं वायुवेगतः ।।8।।
परीक्षणार्थं तत्त्वस्य वानरस्येदमब्रुवन्। गच्छत्येष महासत्त्वो वानरो वायुविक्रमः ।।9।।

ākāśāttvaritaṃ devairvīkṣyamāṇo jagāma saḥ /
dṛṣṭvānilasutaṃ devā gacchantaṃ vāyuvegataḥ //
parīkṣaṇārthaṃ sattvasya vānarasyedamabruvan /
gacchatyeṣa mahāsattvo vānaro vāyuvikramaḥ //

At that moment he was cruising through the sky with great speed (i.e. haste and swiftness) while all the Gods watched in awe and

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wonder. When they saw the son of the Wind God going with the speed of wind (8), they wanted to test his ability and prowess. So they said amongst themselves, 'This most strong, valiant and valorous monkey is going with the speed of wind (9).

लङ्कां प्रवेष्टुं शक्तो वा न वा जानीमहे बलम्। एवं विचार्य नागानां मातरं सुरसाभिधाम्।। 10।।
अब्रवीद्देवतावृन्दः कौतूहलसमन्वितः। गच्छ त्वं वानरेन्द्रस्य किञ्चिद्विघ्नं समाचर।। 11।।
ज्ञात्वा तस्य बलं बुद्धिं पुनरेहि त्वरान्विता। इत्युक्ता सा ययौ शीघ्रं हनुमद्विघ्नकारणात्।। 12।।

laṅkāṃ praveṣṭuṃ śakto vā na vā jānīmahe balam /
evaṃ vicārya nāgānāṃ mātaraṃ surasābhidhām //
abravīddevatāvṛndaḥ kautūhalasamanvitaḥ /
gaccha tvaṃ vānarendrasya kiñcidvighnaṃ samācara //
jñātvā tasya balaṃ buddhiṃ punarehi tvarānvitā /
ityuktā sā yayau śīghraṃ hanumadvighnakāraṇāt //

But we doubt whether he shall be able to enter Lanka successfully. Therefore, let us find about his competence, courage, strength and valour'. Having discussed amongst themselves thus, they requested Sursa, the mother of subterranean serpents, out of curiosity, 'Oh Sursa! (10) You should go immediately and create some kind of hurdle/ obstacle in the path of this most excellent monkey who is like a king amongst them all (11). Test his strength and intelligence and come back soon'. When the Gods had said so, she immediately went to create an obstacle/hurdle in the path of Hanuman (12).

आवृत्य मार्गं पुरतः स्थित्वा वानरमब्रवीत्। एहि मे वदनं शीघ्रं प्रविशस्व महामते।। 13।।
देवैस्त्वं कल्पितो भक्ष्यः क्षुधासम्पीडितात्मनः। तामाह हनुमान्मातरहं रामस्य शासनात्।। 14।।
गच्छामि जानकीं द्रष्टुं पुनरागम्य सत्वरः। रामाय कुशलं तस्याः कथयित्वा त्वदाननम्।। 15।।

āvṛtya mārgaṃ puratah sthitvā vānaramabravīt /
ehi me vadanaṃ śīghraṃ praviśasva mahāmate //
devaistvaṃ kalpito bhakṣyaḥ kṣudhāsampīḍitātmanaḥ /
tāmāha hanumānmātarahaṃ rāmasya śāsanāt //
gacchāmi jānakīṃ draṣṭuṃ punarāgamya satvaraḥ /
rāmāya kuśalaṃ tasyāḥ kathayitvā tvadānanam //

She stood in front of his path and said, 'Oh you wise one! Come, enter my body (i.e. mouth) soon (13). I was very agitated and tormented with hunger, and so the Gods have made you my prey (so that I can satisfy my hunger)'.

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Then Hanuman said to her, 'Oh mother! On the orders of Sri Ram (14), I am going to see (meet) Janki (Sita). I shall come back soon from there, tell Sri Ram about her welfare, and then I shall come and enter your mouth (but not before that) (15).

निवेक्ष्ये देहि मे मार्गं सुरसायै नमोऽस्तु ते। इत्युक्त्वा पुनरेवाह सुरसा क्षुधितास्म्यहम्।। 16।।
प्रविश्य गच्छ मे वक्त्रं नो चेत्त्वां भक्षयाम्यहम्। इत्युक्तो हनुमानाह मुखं शीघ्रं विदारय।। 17।।
प्रविश्य वदनं तेऽद्य गच्छामि त्वरयान्वितः। इत्युक्त्वा योजनायामदेहो भूत्वा पुरः स्थितः।। 18।।

niveksye dehi me mārgaṃ surasāyai namo'stu te/
ityuktvā punarevāha surasā kṣudhitāsmyaham//
praviśya gaccha me vaktraṃ no cettvāṃ bhakṣayāmyaham/
ityukto hanumānāha mukhaṃ śīghraṃ vidāraya//
praviśya vadanaṃ te'dya vacchāmi tvarayānvitaḥ/
ityuktvā yojanāyāmadeho bhūtvā puraḥ sthitaḥ//

Oh Sursa! I bow before you and request you to leave my path'.

At this, Sursa replied, 'I am very hungry (16). So, enter my mouth once and then you can come out to proceed further ahead. Otherwise, I shall eat you up (i.e. kill you)'.

Then Hanuman said, 'Alright. If that is the case, then open your mouth quickly (17). I shall enter your body and then proceed to Lanka'. Saying so, Hanuman spread his body for one Yojan (8 miles) and stood before her (18).

दृष्ट्वा हनूमतो रूपं सुरसा पञ्चयोजनम्। मुखं चकार हनुमान् द्विगुणं रूपमादधत्।। 19।।
ततश्चकार सुरसा योजनानां च विंशतिम्। वक्त्रं चकार हनुमांस्त्रिंशद्योजनसम्मितम्।। 20।।

dṛṣṭvā hanūmato rūpaṃ surasā pañcayojanam/
mukhaṃ cakāra hanumāna dviguṇaṃ rūpamādadhat//
tataścakāra surasā pañca yojanānāṃ ca viṃśatim/
vaktraṃ cakāra hanumāṃstriṃśadyojanasammitam//

Seeing this (huge) form of Hanuman, Sursa expanded her mouth to five Yojans (40 miles). Then Hanuman doubled his body (19). Thereafter, Sursa widened her body to twenty Yojans (160 miles) and Hanuman to thirty Yojans (240 miles) (20).

ततश्चकार सुरसा पञ्चाशद्योजनायतम्। वक्त्रं तदा हनूमांस्तु बभूवाङ्गुष्ठसन्निभः।। 21।।
प्रविश्य वदनं तस्याः पुनरेत्य पुरः स्थितः। प्रविष्टो निर्गतोऽहं ते वदनं देवि ते नमः।। 22।।

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tataścakāra surasā pañcāśadyojanāyatam/
vaktraṃ tadā hanūmāṃstu babhūvāṅguṣṭhasannibhaḥ //
praviśya vadanaṃ tasyāḥ punaretya puraḥ sthitaḥ/
praviṣṭo nirgato'haṃ te vadanaṃ devi te namaḥ //

Finally when Sursa had spread (widened) her mouth for fifty Yojans (400 miles), Hanuman became as small as a thumb (21), entered her mouth and immediately came out and stood before her. He said, 'Oh goddess! I have entered your body (i.e. mouth) and have come out as you have desired. Now I bid farewell to you by bowing before you (22).

[Note :—The yawning gap of fifty Yojans or 50 x 8 = 400 miles is not a joke. One can well visualise the proportionate size of Sursa's eyes, tongue, nose, chin etc. with such a wide, open mouth. Then suddenly Hanuman reduced himself to the size of a thumb, i.e. a few centimeters. For all practical purposes, it was like trying to see a fly with naked eyes from a distance of roughly four hundred miles or so! Hanuman slipped in and came out un-noticed from the vast, yawning, cavernous mouth of Sursa to keep her words. Sursa realised that Hanuman was very clever, as is evident in the next verse.]

एवं वदन्तं दृष्ट्वा सा हनूमन्तमथाब्रवीत्। गच्छ साधय रामस्य कार्यं बुद्धिमतां वर।। 23।।
देवैः सम्प्रेषिताहं ते बलं जिज्ञासुभिः कपे। दृष्ट्वा सीतां पुनर्गत्वा रामं द्रक्ष्यसि गच्छ भोः।।24।।

evaṃ vadantaṃ dṛṣṭvā sā hanūmantamathābravīt/
gaccha sādhaya rāmasya kāryaṃ buddhimatāṃ vara //
devaiḥ sampreṣitāhaṃ te balaṃ jijñāsubhiḥ kape/
dṛṣṭvā sītāṃ punargatvā rāmaṃ drakṣyasi gaccha bhoḥ //

Hearing Hanuman say so, Sursa replied, 'Oh the best amongst the intelligent and wise ones! Go and successfully complete Sri Ram's work (23). Oh monkey! The Gods wished to know and learn about your strength, courage, prowess and valour. So it is they who have sent me to you. I am certain that you shall see (and meet) Sita and come back to meet Sri Ram again very soon. You can go now!' (24).

इत्युक्त्वा सा ययौ देवलोकं वायुसुतः पुनः। जगाम वायुमार्गेण गरुत्मानिव पक्षिराट्।। 25।।
समुद्रोऽप्याह मैनाकं मणिकाञ्चनपर्वतम्। गच्छत्येष महासत्त्वो हनुमान्मारुतात्मजः।।26।।
रामस्य कार्यसिद्ध्यर्थं तस्य त्वं सचिवो भव। सगरैर्वर्द्धितो यस्मात्पुराहं सागरोऽभवम्।।27।।

ityuktvā sā yayau devalokaṃ vāyusutaḥ punaḥ/
jagāma vāyumārgeṇa garutmāniva pakṣirāṭ //

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samudro'pyāha mainākaṃ maṇikāñcanaparvatam /
gacchatyeṣa mahāsattvo hanūmānmārutātmajaḥ //
rāmasya kāryasiddhyarthaṃ tasya tvaṃ sacivo bhava /
sagarairvarddhito yasmātpurāhaṃ sāgaro'bhavam //

Saying so, Sursa went back to the abode of Gods and Hanuman resumed his flight across the path of the sky (literally, the path taken by the wind) like done by the king of birds, Garud (the legendary eagle or heron—the swift mount of Lord Vishnu) (25).

At about this time, the ocean said to Mt. Mainak which was liberally endowed with (made up of) gold and gems, 'The most strong and valorous Hanuman, the son of the Wind God (26) who is a messenger of Sri Ram, is on his way to do his work. You must help him. In some previous time, the sons of king Sagar had expanded (i.e. created) me, and that is why I am called 'Sagar' after him (27).

तस्यान्वये बभूवासौ रामो दाशरथिः प्रभुः। तस्य कार्यार्थसिद्ध्यर्थं गच्छत्येष महाकपिः।। 28।।
त्वमुत्तिष्ठ जलात्तूर्णं त्वयि विश्रम्य गच्छतु। स तथेति प्रादुरभूज्जलमध्यान्महोन्नतः।। 29।।

tasyānvaye babhūvāsau rāmo dāśarathiḥ prabhuḥ /
tasya kāryārthasiddhyarthaṃ gacchatyeṣa mahākapiḥ //
tvamuttiṣṭha jalāttūrṇaṃ tvayi viśramya gacchatu /
sa tatheti prādurabhūjjalamadhyānmahonnataḥ //

Lord Ram, the son of Dashrath, has been born in that clan (i.e. Sagar's clan), and this great monkey (Hanuman) is going with the purpose of accomplishing his task (28). You rise above the water so that he can have some rest upon you before proceeding further'. Saying 'alright', the mountain raised itself high above in the centre of the ocean (29).

नानामणिमयैः शृङ्गैस्तस्योपरि नराकृतिः। प्राह यान्तं हनूमन्तं मैनाकोऽहं महाकपे।। 30।।
समुद्रेण समादिष्टस्त्वद्विश्रामाय मारुते। आगच्छामृतकल्पानि जग्ध्वा पक्वफलानि मे।। 31।।

nānāmaṇimayaiḥ śṛṅgaistasyopari narakṛtiḥ /
prāha yāntaṃ hanūmantaṃ maināko'haṃ mahākape //
samudreṇa samādiṣṭastvadviśrāmāya mārute /
āgacchāmṛtakalpāni jagdhvā pakvaphalāni me //

It had numerous gem-studded peaks. It assumed a human form and stood atop one of the peaks. He said to Hanuman, 'Oh the great monkey! Oh Hanuman! I am Mainak. The ocean has ordered me to

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give you some rest. Come; eat my succulent and sweet fruits which are like Amrit (nectar-like and ripe) (31).

विश्राम्यात्र क्षणं पश्चाद्गमियष्यसि यथासुखम्। एवमुक्तोऽथ तं प्राह हनुमान्मारुतात्मजः।। 32।।
गच्छतो रामकार्यार्थं भक्षणं मे कथं भवेत्। विश्रामो वा कथं मे स्यादन्तव्यं त्वरितं मया।।33।।

viśramyātra kṣaṇaṃ paścādgamiṣyasi yathāsukham /
evamukto'tha taṃ prāha hanūmānmārutātmajaḥ //
gacchato rāmakāryārthaṃ bhakṣaṇaṃ me kathaṃ bhavet /
viśrāmo vā kathaṃ me syādgantavyaṃ tvaritaṃ mayā //

Rest here for a while and then you can cheerfully proceed ahead'. When Mainak had said so, the son of the Wind God, Hanuman replied (32), 'How can I rest or eat anything while on my way to do Sri Ram's work. (I don't want to waste even a single moment.) I have to go in haste, so where is the leisure time for me to take rest?' (33)

इत्युक्त्वा स्पृष्टशिखरः कराग्रेण ययौ कपिः। किञ्चिद्दूरं गतस्यास्य छायां छायाग्रहोऽग्रहीत्।। 34।।
सिंहिका नाम सा घोरा जलमध्ये स्थिता सदा। आकाशगामिनां छायामाक्रम्याकृष्य भक्षयेत्।।35।।

ityuktvā spṛṣṭaśikharaḥ karāgreṇa yayau kapiḥ /
kiñciddūraṃ gatasyāsya chāyāṃ chāyāgraho'grahīt //
siṃhikā nāma sā ghorā jalamadhye sthitā sadā /
ākāśagāmināṃ chāyāmākramyākṛṣya bhakṣayet //

Saying this, (in order to honour Mainak's request—) Hanuman simply touched its peak with his fingers and proceeded ahead. He had gone but a little distance only when a 'Chhaya Graha' (literally a creature who could catch hold of the shadow of those flying overhead, thereby capturing them) caught hold of his shadow falling on the water (34). She was a very formidable and ferocious demoness by the name of Singhika who stayed in the water and caught hold of the shadow of all the creatures flying in the sky above the ocean, and devoured them (35).

[Note :—In modern parlance, it could have been a Radar installed by Ravana in the ocean to protect Lanka against intrusion by any flying object coming in from the north, and preventing it from entering the city.]

तया गृहीतो हनुमांश्चिन्तयामास वीर्यवान्। केनेदं मे कृतं वेगरोधनं विघ्नकारिणा।। 36।।
दृश्यते नैव कोऽप्यत्र विस्मयो मे प्रजायते। एवं विचिन्त्य हनूमानधो दृष्टिं प्रसारयत्।।37।।
तत्र दृष्ट्वा महाकायां सिंहिकां घोररूपिणीम्। पपात सलिले तूर्णं पद्भ्यामेवाहनद्रुषा।।38।।

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tayā gṛhīto hanūmāṃścintayāmāsa vīryavān /
kenedaṃ me kṛtaṃ vegarodhanaṃ vighnakāriṇā //
dṛśyate naiva ko'pyatra vismayo me prajāyate /
evaṃ vicintya hanūmānadho dṛṣṭiṃ prasārayat //
tatra dṛṣṭvā mahākāyāṃ siṃhikāṃ ghorarūpiṇīm /
papāta salile tūrṇaṃ padbhyāmevāhanadruṣā //

On being caught by her, the brave and courageous Hanuman thought, 'What is this obstacle creating a drag on my flight and has virtually stopped my progress and put a break on my speed? (36). There is nothing visible here on the surface. This is a great mystery for me.' While wondering thus he looked downwards (37). When he saw Singhika who had a most awesome, fearful, ferocious and huge body, he immediately jumped in the water and killed her with his kicks (38).

पुनरुत्प्लुत्य हनुमान्दक्षिणाभिमुखो ययौ। ततो दक्षिणामासाद्य कूलं नानाफलद्रुमम्।। 39।।
नानापक्षिमृगाकीर्णं नानापुष्पलतावृतम्। ततो ददर्श नगरं त्रिकूटाचलमूर्धनि।।40।।
प्राकारैर्बहुभिर्युक्तं परिखाभिश्च सर्वतः। प्रवेक्ष्यामि कथं लङ्कामिति चिन्तापरोऽभवत्।।41।।

punarutplutya hanūmāndakṣiṇābhimukho yayau /
tato dakṣiṇamāsādya kūlaṃ nānāphaladrumam //
nānāpakṣimṛgākīrṇaṃ nānāpuṣpalatāvṛtam /
tato dadarśa nagaraṃ trikuṭācalamūrdhani //
prākārairbahubhiryuktaṃ parikhābhiśca sarvataḥ /
pravekṣyāmi kathaṃ laṅkāmiti cintāparo'bhavat //

After that, Hanuman leapt again and moved southwards and reached the south shore of the ocean. There were various types of verdant fruit trees there (39); it was full of different types of birds and animals, and covered by numerous flowering creepers. From there, he saw the city of Lanka established atop the Trikoot mountain (40). It (Lanka) was surrounded on all the sides by many rounds of ramparts and moats. Observing it, he started worrying and pondering over the optional ways of entering the city (41).

रात्रौ वेक्ष्यामि सूक्ष्मोऽहं लङ्कां रावणपालिताम्।
एवं विचिन्त्य तत्रैव स्थित्वा लङ्कां जगाम सः।।42।।
धृत्वा सूक्ष्मं वपुर्द्वारं प्रविवेश प्रतापवान्। तत्र लङ्कापुरी साक्षाद्राक्षसीवेषधारिणी।।43।।

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rātrau vekṣyāmi sūkṣmo'haṃ laṅkāṃ rāvaṇapālitām /
evaṃ vicintya tatraiva sthitvā laṅkāṃ jagāma saḥ //
dhṛtvā sūkṣmaṃ vapurdvāraṃ praviveśa pratāpavān /
tatra laṅkāpurī sākṣādrākṣasīveṣadhāriṇī //

Then he finally decided that he shall enter the city, which was looked after (sustained and administered) by Ravana, during the night by assuming a miniscule body. So he waited there (near the sea shore), and at nightfall, he started for the city (42). At the time when the most valorous and valiant Hanuman entered the city in a miniature form, the city of Lanka had personified itself in the form of a demoness (called Lankini) and stood there to guard the entrance (43).

[Note :—Lankini was actually the patron demoness goddess of Lanka.]

प्रविशन्तं हनूमन्तं दृष्ट्वा लंका व्यतर्जयत्। कस्त्वं वानररूपेण मामनादृत्य लङ्किनीम्।। 44।।
प्रविश्य चोरवद्रात्रौ किं भवान्कर्तुमिच्छति। इत्युक्त्वा रोषताम्राक्षी पादेनाभिजघान तम्।।45।।

praviśantaṃ hanūmantaṃ dṛṣṭvā laṅkā vyatarjayat /
kastvaṃ vānararūpeṇa māmanādṛtya laṅkinīm //
praviśya coravadrātrau kiṃ bhavānkartumicchati /
ityuktvā roṣatāmrākṣī padenābhijaghāna tam //

When she saw Hanuman enter the city, she challenged him and asked, 'Who are you in the form of a monkey who has the temerity to insult me, the Lankini, by undermining my authority and trying to sneak in without my permission? (44). Why are you entering the city like a thief? What do you want to do here?' Saying this, she made her eyes red with anger and indignation, and kicked him with contempt (45).

हनुमानपि तां वाममुष्टिनावज्ञयाहनत्। तदैव पतिता भूमौ रक्तमुद्वमती भृशम्।। 46।।
उत्थाय प्राह सा लङ्का हनूमन्तं महाबलम्। हनूमन् गच्छ भद्रं ते जिता लङ्का त्वयानघ।।47।।

hanūmānapi tāṃ vāmamuṣṭināvajñayāhanat /
tadaiva patitā bhūmau raktamudvamatī bhṛśam //
utthāya prāha sā laṅkā hanūmantaṃ mahābalam /
hanūman gaccha bhadraṃ te jitā laṅkā tvayānagha //

Ignoring her questions, Hanuman punched her with his left hand, at which she spitted or vomited a lot of blood and fell to the ground, vexed and swooning (46). After sometime, she recovered herself and

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got up. She said to him, 'Oh Hanuman! Go; you be blessed! Oh Anagh (the sinless, faultless, pure one)! You have already won over the city of Lanka symbolically (47).

पुराहं ब्रह्मणा प्रोक्ता ह्यष्टाविंशतिपर्यये। त्रेतायुगे दाशरथी रामो नारायणोऽव्ययः।।48।।
जनिष्यते योगमाया सीता जनकवेश्मनि। भूभारहरणार्थाय प्रार्थितोऽयं मया क्वचित्।।49।।

purāhaṃ brahmaṇā proktā hyaṣṭāviṃśatiparyaye/
tretāyuge dāśarathī rāmo nārāyaṇo'vyayaḥ//
janiṣyate yogamāyā sītā janakaveśmani/
bhūbhāraharaṇārthāya prārthito'yaṃ mayā kvacit//

In an ancient time, Lord Brahma had told me that during the Treta Yug of the 28th four-Yug cycle, the imperishable and eternal Narayan shall manifest himself or take birth as Sri Ram, the son of Dashrath. His Yogmaya (literally, the cosmic, infinite energy having its origin in the meditative or contemplative state of the supreme Brahm; the stupendous power that Brahm acquired as a result of it enabled him to manifest this creation and take care of it) shall manifest in the household of Janak as Sita. It is because, in some earlier time, I had prayed to him to somehow remove the burden of the earth (from the horrifying influence and torments inflicted upon it by the demons) (48-49).

[Note :—It must be noted here that Ravana's defenses were impregnated by dark sheep. Those who were supposed to guard and protect the city of Lanka and their ruler Ravana with their lives, till the last breath in their bodies, were internally inclined towards his destruction. Notwithstanding the spiritual outlook of these individuals, such chinks in Ravan's so-called invincible and impregnable armour, such betrayals proved to be the last nail in his destiny's coffin. See verse nos. 54-56 below.]

सभार्यो राघवो भ्रात्रा गमिष्यति महावनम्। तत्र सीतां महामायां रावणोऽपहरिष्यति।।50।।
पश्चाद्रामेण साचिव्यं सुग्रीवस्य भविष्यति। सुग्रीवो जानकीं द्रष्टुं वानरान्प्रेषयिष्यति।।51।।

sabhāryo rāghavo bhrātā gamiṣyati mahāvanam/
tatra sītāṃ mahāmāyāṃ ravaṇo'pahariṣyati//
paścādrāmeṇa sācivyaṃ sugrīvasya bhaviṣyati/
sugrīvo jānakīṃ draṣṭuṃ vānarānpreṣayiṣyati//

Raghav (Sri Ram) accompanied by his wife (Sita) and brother (Laxman) would go to the great forest (i.e. Dandakaranya). There, Ravana would abduct Sita who is an image of the Lord's great deluding

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powers called 'Maha Maya' (50). After that, he (Sri Ram) will have Sugriv as his chief advisor/secretary/minister, and the latter would dispatch monkeys in search of Janki (Sita) (51).

तत्रैको वानरो रात्रावागमिष्यति तेऽन्तिकम्। त्वया च भर्त्सितः सोऽपि त्वां हनिष्यति मुष्टिना ।। 52 ।।
तेनाहता त्वं व्यथिता भविष्यसि यदानघे। तदैव रावणस्यान्तो भविष्यति न संशयः ।। 53 ।।

tatraiko vānaro rātrāvāgamiṣyati te'ntikam /
tvayā ca bhartsitaḥ so'pi tvāṃ haniṣyati muṣṭinā //
tenāhatā tvaṃ vyathitā bhaviṣyasi yadānaghe /
tadaiva rāvaṇasyānto bhaviṣyati na saṃśayaḥ //

Out of them, one monkey will come to you during the night. When you would challenge and reproach him, he will punch you with his clenched fists (52). Oh Anagh! At the time when you would be injured, stunned and perplexed upon being hit by him, you can be sure that Ravana's end is near at hand. There is no doubt about it' (53).

तस्मात्त्वया जिता लङ्का जितं सर्वं त्वयानघ। रावणान्तःपुरवरे क्रीडाकाननमुत्तमम् ।। 54 ।।
तन्मध्येऽशोकवनिका दिव्यपादपसङ्कुला। अस्ति तस्यां महावृक्षः शिंशपा नाम मध्यगः ।। 55 ।।
तत्रास्ते जानकी घोररक्षसीभिः सुरक्षिता। दृष्ट्वैव गच्छ त्वरितं राघवाय निवेदय ।। 56 ।।

tasmāttvayā jitā laṅkā jitaṃ sarvaṃ tvayānagha /
rāvaṇāntaḥpuravare krīḍākānanamuttamam //
tanmadhye'śokavanikā divyapādapasaṅkulā /
asti tasyāṃ mahāvṛkṣaḥ śiṃśapā nāma madhyagaḥ //
tatrāste jānakī ghorarākṣasībhiḥ surakṣitā /
dṛṣṭvaiva gaccha tvaritaṃ rāghavāya nivedaya //

Hence, oh the sinless, pure, powerful and mighty one (for whom I was waiting for so many years)! If you can conquer me, the Lankini (who is the personification of the patron goddess of Lanka with the mandate to protect the city), you have literally won over the entire city. Inside the royal palace of Ravana is a beautiful and most excellent garden for the purpose of his enjoyment, amusement and frolicking around (54). In it is a grove of trees called 'Ashok Van', which has divine, beautiful, vibrant and magnificent trees. In the centre of it is a large Shinshupa tree (the Indian rose wood tree—*Delbergia Sisu*) (55). Janki stays there under the constant vigil and care of ferocious demonesses. Go, have her Darshan (divine, holy view) and inform Sri Ram about her as soon as possible (56).

[Note :—What a betrayal and treason! Had it not been for the likes of

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Lankinis, Vibhishans and Sarmas etc. in Ravana's camp, he would have been truly unconquerable.]

धन्याहमप्यद्य चिराय राघवस्मृतिर्ममासीद्भवपाशमोचिनी।
तद्भक्तसङ्गोऽप्यतिदुर्लभो मम प्रसीदतां दाशरथिः सदा हृदि।। 57।।

dhanyāhamapyadya cirāya rāghavasmṛtirmamāsīdbhavapāśamocinī/
tadbhaktasaṅgo'pyatidurlabho mama prasīdatāṃ dāśarathiḥ sadā hṛdi//

Today, after a long time, I have been able to remember Raghav (Sri Ram) who can destroy all the fetters that shackle a creature to this mundane, deluding, entrapping and artificial world. I have also had the privilege of having contact and communion with his devotee, which is very rare. Hence, I am very blessed, lucky and most privileged. Let that son of Dashrath (Sri Ram), who always resides in my heart, be pleased with me' (57).

उल्लङ्घितेऽब्धौ पवनात्मजेन धरासुतायाश्च दशाननस्य।
पुस्फोर वामाक्षि भुजश्च तीव्रं रामस्य दक्षाङ्गमतीन्द्रियस्य।।58।।

ullaṅghite'bdhau pavanātmajena dharāsutāyāśca daśānanasya/
pusphora vāmākṣi bhujaśca tīvraṃ rāmasya dakṣāṅgamatīndriyasya//

As soon as the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) crossed the ocean, omens began to occur—the left arms of the daughter of the earth (Sita) and Ravana, the 10-headed one, began to flutter violently, while the same fluttering occurred in the right arm of Sri Ram (58).

[Note :—(i) Sita has been called the daughter of the earth because, as per legend, she was found in a pitcher while Janak was ploughing the Land to clear it for the purpose of doing some fire sacrifice. See Baal Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 59-60. (ii) The palpitation/fluttering/quivering of muscles on the left side of the body of a female is considered an auspicious omen or sign while the opposite side prevails for males. The reverse (i.e. the left side of males and the right side of females) is considered a bad omen. The fluttering occurred ominous for Ravana, while it was auspicious for Ram and Sita.]

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Sundar Kand — Canto 2

Hanuman enters the Ashok Van; Ravana's dream; He threatens Sita

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

ततो जगाम हनुमान् लङ्कां परमशोभनाम्। रात्रौ सूक्ष्मतनुर्भूत्वा बभ्राम परितः पुरीम्।।1।।
सीतान्वेषणकार्यार्थी प्रविवेश नृपालयम्। तत्र सर्वप्रदेशेषु विविच्य हनुमान्कपिः।।2।।
नापश्यज्जानकीं स्मृत्वा ततो लङ्काभिभाषितम्। जगाम हनुमान् शीघ्रमशोकवनिकां शुभाम्।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tato jagāma hanumān laṅkāṃ paramaśobhanām /
ratrau sūkṣmatanurbhūtvā babhrāma paritaḥ purīm //
sītānveṣaṇakāryārthī praviveśa nṛpālayam /
tatra sarvapradeśeṣu vivicya hanumānkapi //
nāpaśyajjānakīṃ smṛtvā tato laṅkābhibhāṣitam /
jagāma hanumān śīghramaśokavanikāṃ śubhām //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! After that, Hanuman assumed a very miniature form and entered the most majestic and magnificent city of Lanka during the night. He spent the night roaming around (in order to get a hang of the city as well as to reconnoiter) (1). To find out about Sita, he entered the chief palace of Ravana. After a futile search when he could not find Sita anywhere, he remembered the words of Lankini (see Canto 1, verse no. 55) and immediately went to the charming and most auspicious private garden of Ravana, called the 'Ashok Van' (2-3).

[Note :—Ashok Van is described as being auspicious because Sita was sitting in it.]

सुरपादपसम्बाधां रत्नसोपानवापिकाम्। नानापक्षिमृगाकीर्णां स्वर्णप्रासादशोभिताम्।।4।।
फलैरानम्रशाखाग्रपादपैः परिवारिताम्। विचिन्वन् जानकीं तत्र प्रतिवृक्षं मरुत्सुतः।।5।।
ददर्शाभ्रंलिहं तत्र चैत्यप्रासादमुत्तमम्। दृष्ट्वा विस्मयमापन्नो मणिस्तम्भशतान्वितम्।।6।।

surapādapasambādhāṃ ratnasopānavāpikām /
nānāpakṣimṛgākīrṇāṃ svarṇaprāsādaśobhitām //
phalairānamraśākhāgrapādapaiḥ parivāritām /
vicinvan jānakīṃ tatra prativṛkṣaṃ marutsutaḥ //
dadarśābhraṃlihaṃ tatra caityaprāsādamuttamam /
dṛṣṭvā vismayamāpanno maṇistambhaśatānvitam //

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That grove (or garden) was full of (i.e. richly endowed with) Kalpa-tree like trees; the steps of its ponds were gem-studded; numerous varieties of birds and animals were roaming freely in it, while its golden pavilions and cottages had magnificent beauty and charm (4).

That grove/garden was surrounded by trees which were so laden with fruits that their branches were bent under their weight. Hanuman, the son of the Wind God, searched for Sita under each tree (5), and finally saw a beautiful temple. It was so high (i.e. its steeple or spire was so high) that it touched the clouds in the sky. He was held enthralled and wondered at the sight of that grand building which had hundreds of pillars studded with gems (6).

[Note :—Verse nos. 4-6 describes the beauty of the Ashok Van in brief. It was the personal royal garden of Ravana.]

समतीत्य पुनर्गत्वा किञ्चिद्दूरं स मारुतिः। ददर्श शिंशपावृक्षमत्यन्तनिविडच्छदम्।।7।।
अदृष्टातपमाकीर्णं स्वर्णवर्णविहङ्गमम्। तन्मूले राक्षसीमध्ये स्थितां जनकनन्दिनीम्।।8।।
ददर्श हनुमान् वीरो देवतामिव भूतले। एकवेणीं कृशां दीनां मलिनाम्बरधारिणीम्।।9।।

samatītya punargatvā kiñciddūraṁ sa mārutiḥ/
dadarśa śiṁśapāvṛkṣamatyantanividacchadam//
adṛṣṭātapamākīrṇaṁ svarṇavarṇavihaṅgamam/
tanmūle rākṣasīmadhye sthitāṁ janakanandinīm//
dadarśa hanumān vīro devatāmiva bhūtale/
ekaveṇīṁ kṛśāṁ dīnāṁ malināmbaradhāriṇīm//

When he moved a little ahead in it, he saw a Shinshupa (Indian red wood) tree with a thick cover of foliage (7). Sun light never penetrated it to the ground, and it was full of birds with golden feathers. At the bottom of it, there was the daughter of Janak (Sita) surrounded by demonesses (8). The brave and courageous Hanuman saw that she was sitting on the ground like a goddess. Her hairs had stuck together in a thick plait; she was very emaciated, weak and miserable, and wore dirty, unkempt clothes (9).

[Note :—Hanuman had not met Vibhishan prior to seeing Sita. He was told of her exact location by Lankini herself. This is sharply in contrast with Tulsidas' 'Ram Charit Manas' where Hanuman had met Vibhishan before meeting Sita, and it was the former who had guided him to Sita's place.]

भूमौ शयानां शोचन्तीं रामरामेति भाषिणीम्। त्रातारं नाधिगच्छन्तीमुपवासकृशां शुभाम्।।10।।

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शाखान्तच्छदमध्यस्थो ददर्श कपिकुञ्जरः। कृतार्थोऽहं कृतार्थोऽहं दृष्ट्वा जनकनन्दिनीम्।। 11।।
मयैव साधितं कार्यं रामस्य परमात्मनः। ततः किलकिलाशब्दो बभूवान्तःपुराद्बहिः।। 12।।

bhumau śayānāṃ śocantīṃ rāmarāmeti bhāṣiṇīm /
trātāraṃ nādhigacchantīmupavāsakṛśāṃ śubhām //
śākhāntacchadamadhyastho dadarśa kapikuñjaraḥ /
kṛtārtho'haṃ kṛtārtho'haṃ dṛṣṭvā janakanandinīm //
mayaiva sādhitaṃ kāryaṃ rāmasya paramātmanaḥ /
tataḥ kilakilāśabdo babhūvāntaḥpurādbahiḥ //

That auspicious one (Sita) was lying on the ground in this miserable condition, most distressed, anguished and contrite, gravely worrying and extremely remorseful, and constantly repeating 'Ram, Ram'. She did not see any ray of hope, any chance of help, remotest succour and any redemption from her torments and miseries. She had become very emaciated and weak due to fasting (willingly abstaining from taking food) (10).

The best amongst the monkeys (Hanuman) hid amongst the leaves on the branches of the tree and observed her quietly. He said to himself that he was most fortunate, lucky and privileged to see Janak-Nandani (the daughter of Janak, Sita) today (11). 'I am so fortunate and the chosen one (or the lucky one) that the work of Sri Ram, who is the Parmatma (the supreme Soul, the Lord God personfied) has been entrusted to me, and I have done it successfully'. Just about this time, a loud sound of joyous chuckling and giggling in mirth and merriment came from inside the royal palace (12).

किमेतदिति सँल्लीनो वृक्षपत्रेषु मारुतिः। आयान्तं रावणं तत्र स्त्रीजनैः परिवारितम्।। 13।।
दशास्यं विंशतिभुजं नीलाञ्जनचयोपमम्। दृष्ट्वा विस्मयमापन्नः पत्रखण्डेष्वलीयत।। 14।।

kimetaditi saṁllīno vṛkṣapatreṣu mārutiḥ /
āyāntaṃ rāvaṇaṃ tatra strījanaiḥ parivāritam //
daśāsyaṃ viṃśatibhujaṃ nīlāñjanacayopamam /
dṛṣṭvā vismayamāpannaḥ patrakhaṇḍeṣvalīyata //

Maruti (the son of Maruti, the Wind God; Hanuman) wondered what that sound meant, and saw through the thick foliage that Ravana was coming there accompanied by other women (13). Seeing his ten mouths (heads), twenty arms and a black body which was like a mountain of 'Kajjal' (literally, black soot mixed with oil and applied to the eyelids as an ointment), Hanuman was very astonished and

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full of wonder (at his awe inspiring, formidably colossus, strange and fearsome body). He concealed himself properly among the leaves (14).

रावणो राघवेणाशु मरणं मे कथं भवेत्। सीतार्थमपि नायाति रामः किं कारणं भवेत्।। 15।।
इत्येवं चिन्तयन्नित्यं राममेव सदा हृदि। तस्मिन्दिनेऽपररात्रौ रावणो राक्षसाधिपः।। 16।।
स्वप्ने रामेण सन्दिष्टः कश्चिदागत्य वानरः। कामरूपधरः सूक्ष्मो वृक्षाग्रस्थोऽनुपश्यति।। 17।।

rāvaṇo rāghaveṇāśu maraṇaṃ me kathaṃ bhavet /
sītārthamapi nāyāti rāmaḥ kiṃ kāraṇaṃ bhavet //
ityevaṃ cintayannityaṃ rāmameva sadā hṛdi /
tasmindine'pararātrau rāvaṇo rākṣasādhipaḥ //
svapne rāmeṇa sandiṣṭaḥ kaścidāgatya vānaraḥ /
kāmarūpadharaḥ sūkṣmo vṛkṣāgrastho'nupaśyati //

Ravana was constantly worried and very anxious as to when he would die at the hands of Raghav (Sri Ram), and wondered why he (Ram) has not yet come even for the sake of Sita (15).

In this manner, since he was constantly thinking of Sri Ram in his heart, the king of demons Ravana had a dream late that night that some monkey, who could assume any form that he wished, had brought a message from Sri Ram, and having assumed a miniature form, he was sitting on the branch of a tree and observing all the goings on (16-17).

[Note :—Ravana had all along known or had guessed rather accurately, that Sri Ram and Sita were no ordinary people. He knew that his only chance of deliverance, emancipation and salvation was now at hand, or he would lose the golden opportunity forever. See also Aranya Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 58-61. That is why he was so eager to face Sri Ram and had precipitated the stand-off with him by stealing Sita. This verse, as many others, clearly show that Ravana had kidnapped Sita not with the intention to satisfy his lust or passions or had any amorous designs on her; it was a medium, an excuse for him to get rid of his evil body and free himself from the fetters that tied his soul to it. See also (i) Aranya Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 58-61; Canto 6, verse 30-35; Canto 7, verse 65; (ii) Lanka Kand, Canto 7, verse nos. 44-47; Canto 10, verse 55-61 and (iii) Uttar Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 31-42.]

इति दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं स्वप्नं स्वात्मन्येवानुचिन्त्य सः। स्वप्नः कदाचित्सत्यः स्यादेवं तत्र करोम्यहम्।। 18।।
जानकीं वाक्शरैर्विद्ध्वा दुःखितां नितरामहम्। करोमि दृष्ट्वा रामाय निवेदयतु वानरः।। 19।।

iti dṛṣṭvādbhutaṃ svapnaṃ svātmanyevānucintya saḥ /
svapnaḥ kadācitsatyaḥ syādevaṃ tatra karomyaham //

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jānakīṃ vākśarairviddhvā duḥkhitāṃ nitarāmaham /
karomi dṛṣṭvā rāmāya nivedayatu vānaraḥ //

When he saw this strange and mysterious dream, he thought to himself, 'May be this dream is true. So, if that is the case, I must do one thing (18). I must reproach and verbally torment Sita in harsh words so that she becomes extremely distressed, agitated and miserable. As a result, that monkey (who must be hiding somewhere nearby, as per the dream, in the tree) would hear all that and go back and tell Sri Ram all about it (which would compel the Lord to hurry up)' (19).

इत्येवं चिन्तयन्सीतासमीपमगमद्द्रुतम्। नूपुराणां किङ्किणीनां श्रुत्वा शिञ्जितमङ्गना।। 20।।
सीता भीता लीयमाना स्वात्मन्येव सुमध्यमा। अधोमुख्यश्रुनयना स्थिता रामार्पितान्तरा।।21।।

ityevaṃ cintayansītāsamīpamagamaddrutam /
nūpurāṇāṃ kiṅkiṇīnāṃ śrutvā śiñjitamaṅganā //
sītā bhītā līyamānā svātmanyeva sumadhyamā /
adhomukhyaśrunayanā sthitā rāmārpitāntarā //

Deciding thus, he immediately went hastily near Sita. Hearing the sound of the anklets and bracelets (worn by Ravana's women), the auspicious Sita (20) became scared. She gathered herself (i.e. shrunk herself as much as she physically and practically could) and sat with a lowered face. Her eyes were filled with tears and she concentrated her heart (i.e. fixed it) in the thoughts of Sri Ram (21).

रावणोऽपि तदा सीतामालोक्याह सुमध्यमे। मां दृष्ट्वा किं वृथा सुभ्रु स्वात्मन्येव विलीयसे।। 22।।
रामो वनचराणां हि मध्ये तिष्ठति सानुजः। कदाचिद्दृश्यते कैश्चित्कदाचित्रैव दृश्यते।।23।।
मया तु बहुधा लोकाः प्रेषितास्तस्य दर्शने। न पश्यन्ति प्रयत्नेन वीक्षमाणाः समन्ततः।।24।।

rāvaṇo'pi tadā sītāmālokyāha sumadhyame /
māṃ dṛṣṭvā kiṃ vṛthā subhru svātmanyeva vilīyase //
rāmo vanacarāṇāṃ hi madhye tiṣṭhati sānujaḥ /
kadāciddṛśyate kaiścitkadācinnaiva dṛśyate //
mayā tu bahudhā lokāḥ preṣitāstasya darśane /
na paśyanti prayatnena vīkṣamāṇāḥ samantataḥ //

Seeing Sita, Ravana said, 'Oh the one with an attractive (slim) waist and beautiful eyebrows (glances)! Why do you unnecessarily shrivel (shrink, shirk) so much on seeing me? (22). Sri Ram stays with his brother among the forest dwellers. He is visible to some and invisible

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to others. *[In other words, he lives among hermits, sages and ascetics. Some can see him in his true, supreme form while meditating upon him, while others can't.] (23).

I had sent so many messengers to see (locate) him, but inspite of looking around carefully everywhere, they could not see (find) him. [In other words, I had tried to fix or divert my sense organs as well as my mind, intellect and heart towards him, but was never once successful. I couldn't fix myself on his true form i.e. I could not meditate and concentrate my mind and intellect on the Lord, and thereby attain enlightenment, emancipation and salvation. All my attempts have failed.] (24).

[Note :—*Sita was already in a very miserable and wretched condition. See verse nos. 8-10. So, by no means can she appear attractive. These lascivious words used by Ravana to describe her in verse no. 22 are just to tease her. Further, the ensuing verse nos.23-28 have a double meaning, as it were. On the face of it, Ravana appears to criticise, deride, insult and demean, to pour scorn at and ridicule Sri Ram, so as to tease and mentally torment Sita no end, but read in the context of verse no. 15-19 above, they assume an absolute different connotation. Such interpretations of his words with a spiritual incline are included in box-brackets with each verse.]

किं करिष्यसि रामेण निःस्पृहेण सदा त्वयि। त्वया सदालिङ्गितोऽपि समीपस्थोऽपि सर्वदा ।। 25 ।।
हृदयेऽस्य न च स्नेहस्त्वयि रामस्य जायते। त्वत्कृतान्सर्वभोगांश्च त्वद्गुणानपि राघवः ।। 26 ।।

kiṃ kariṣyasi rāmeṇa niḥspṛhaṇe sadā tvayi /
tvayā sadāliṅgito'pi samīpastho'pi sarvadā //
hṛdaye'sya na ca snehastvayi rāmasya jāyate /
tvatkṛtānsarvabhogāṃśca tvadguṇānapi rāghavaḥ //

What have you got to do with Sri Ram now? He always remains indifferent and apathetic towards you, inspite of the fact that he always stayed and lived with you for such a long time, and was embraced by you. [In other words, though the Maha Maya or the great deluding powers that you represent always stayed near and around him, almost engulfing or surrounding him and doing his bidding, he still remained unattached, dispassionate, unconcerned, indifferent and renunciate towards that Maya.] (25).

He cannot (or does not) have sincere affection for you because he hasn't bothered about you till now, though he has had a lot of comforts and enjoyments from you, especially when you have so many

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magnificent qualities in you (that should have been lucrative or enticing enough to attract anyone else). [In other words, since the supreme Lord that Sri Ram is, is unattached to anything whatsoever, your deluding powers do not have any influence on him or do not affect him the least, and he gives not a damn to your antics and entangling maverick tricks.] (26).

भुञ्जानोऽपि न जानाति कृतघ्नो निगुर्णोऽधमः। त्वमानीता मया साध्वी दुःखशोकसमाकुला॥ 27॥
इदानीमपि नायाति भक्तिहीनः कथं व्रजेत्। निःसत्त्वो निर्ममो मानी मूढः पण्डितमानवान्॥ 28॥

bhuñjāno'pi na jānāti kṛtaghno nirguṇo'dhamaḥ /
tvamānītā mayā sādhvī duḥkhaśokasamākulā //
idānīmapi nāyāti bhaktihīnaḥ kathaṃ vrajet /
niḥsattvo nirmamo mānī muḍhaḥ paṇḍitamānavān //

Though he had enjoyed everything, he is so thankless and ungrateful, so lacking in any good virtues as being obliged and reciprocating, and dumb witted as well as lowly and mean that he never even bothers to remember them. Look, I have kidnapped you, you are his chaste, loyal and honourable wife, and you are greatly confounded, distressed and agitated due to sorrows, troubles and torments. [In other words, the supreme Lord does not regard himself as the one who is the 'doer' of anything, or allows himself to get involved in enjoying any material thing of this perishable world. The evil forces of the world have forcibly enslaved the creature and its body, and are giving immeasurable amount of trouble to it. The creature has to suffer horribly in this world even against its will. The only way that its horrors can end is by the intervention of the Lord.] (27).

Inspite of all this, he has still not come to retrieve you and take you back. How can he come when he has no affection for you? He is absolutely inept and incapable, is devoid of all compassion (or is virtually cruel and merciless in his heart), is proud, arrogant and haughty, and though he is ignorant, a stupid dude and utterly foolish, he thinks himself to be very sagacious, wise and intelligent. [In other words, since he is not attached or infatuated with Maya, he has paid no attention to it. He has not come to my heart, or I have not been successful in enshrining the Lord in my heart because I am attracted to you, and you are Maya personified. That is why Ram cannot enter my heart till the time you, the Maya, has sway over it. In other words,

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as long as the creature remains infatuated and attracted with Maya, there is no chance of the Lord ever delivering it from the fetters of the horrifying world. He takes sides with no one, and gives all the rewards that they deserve, without any distinction and favours. Since the Lord remains aloof and keeps a safe distance from the humdrum of mundane life, he seems to be proud and haughty, but that is not actually the case for he is without any attributes, emotions and pride. He appears to be dumb, but in actual fact, he is most sagacious, erudite, wise, intelligent and enlightened.] (28).

[Note :—Verse nos. 23-28 are fine examples of sentences that have a double edged meaning—they appear to say something and mean absolutely different and opposite thing. The first meaning of the words of the verses put Ravana in a bad spotlight. But a deeper insight in to their hidden meaning elevates Ravana to a high philosophical pedestal and spiritual plain.]

नराधमं त्वद्विमुखं किं करिष्यसि भामिनि। त्वय्यतीव समासक्तं मां भजस्वासुरोत्तमम्।। 29।।
देवगन्धर्वनागानां यक्षकिन्नरयोषिताम्। भविष्यसि नियोक्त्री त्वं यदि मां प्रतिपद्यसे।। 30।।

narādhamaṃ tvadvimukhaṃ kiṃ kariṣyasi bhāmini /
tvayyatīva samāsaktaṃ māṃ bhajasvāsurottamam //
devagandharvanāgānāṃ yakṣakinnarayoṣitām /
bhaviṣyasi niyoktrī tvaṃ yadi māṃ pratipadyase //

Oh noble woman! What have you got to do with that lowly man who is indifferent to you? Look! I, who am the best among the demons, have great affection for you. So you must accept me (29). If you remain under me, you shall rule over the women of the Gods, the Gandharvas (semi Gods; the celestial musicians), Naags (subterranean creatures; literally, legendary serpents), Yakshas (mythological demigods who are employed by Kuber, the treasurer of the Gods, to guard his treasury and keep his gardens), and Kinnars (heavenly dancers and singers)' (30).

रावणस्य वचः श्रुत्वा सीतामर्षसमन्विता। उवाचाधोमुखी भूत्वा निधाय तृणमन्तरे।। 31।।
राघवाद्बिभ्यता नूनं भिक्षुरूपं त्वया धृतम्। रहिते राघवाभ्यां त्वं शुनीव हविरध्वरे।। 32।।

rāvaṇasya vacaḥ śrutvā sītāmarṣasamanvitā /
uvācādhomukhī bhūtvā nidhāya tṛṇamantare //
rāghavādbibhyatā nūnaṃ bhikṣurūpaṃ tvayā dhṛtam /
rahite rāghavābhyāṃ tvaṃ śunīva haviradhvare //

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Hearing these most reprehensible, outrageously contemptuous and caustically sarcastic words of Ravana, Sita felt very indignant, vexed, angry and appalled. She bent her head in disgust and dismay, and keeping a blade of grass in between her and Ravana, she said disdainfully (31), 'Oh you vile and lowly fellow! There is no doubt in it that you became a mendicant because you were frightened of Raghav (Sri Ram), and when he and his brother were absent, you stole/ abducted me like a dog stealthily steals the offerings of a fire sacrifice when it finds the place unattended (32).

हृतवानसि मां नीच तत्फलं प्राप्स्यसेऽचिरात्। यदा रामशराघातविदारितवपुर्भवान्।।33।।
ज्ञास्यसेऽमानुषं रामं गमिष्यसि यमान्तिकम्। समुद्रं शोषयित्वा वा शरैर्बद्ध्वाथ वारिधिम्।।34।।
हन्तुं त्वां समरे रामो लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितः। आगमिष्यत्यसन्देहो द्रक्ष्यसे राक्षसाधम।।35।।

hṛtavānasi māṃ nīca tatphalaṃ prāpsyase'cirāt/
yadā rāmaśarāghātavidāritavapurbhavān//
jñāsyase'mānuṣaṃ rāmaṃ gamiṣyasi yamāntikam/
samudraṃ śoṣayitvā vā śarairbaddhvātha vāridhim//
hantuṃ tvāṃ samare rāmo lakṣmaṇena samanvitaḥ/
āgamiṣyatyasandeho drakṣyase rākṣasādhama//

You shall very soon get its reward (or punishment). You shall be pierced by the rain (i.e. hail, shower) of Sri Ram's arrows (33) and go to hell. It will be then that your realise that he (Sri Ram) is not an ordinary human. The ocean would either be dried up or a bridge would be built over it by the arrows (of Sri Ram and Laxman) (34). Oh the most lowly and wretched demon! There is no doubt that you will soon see (or find out) that Sri Ram, along with Laxman, will come to kill you in the battle (35).

त्वां सपुत्रं सहबलं हत्वा नेष्यति मां पुरम्। श्रुत्वा रक्षःपतिः क्रुद्धो जानक्याः परुषाक्षरम्।।36।।
वाक्यं क्रोधसमाविष्टः खड्गमुद्यम्य सत्वरः। हन्तुं जनकराजस्य तनयां ताम्रलोचनः।।37।।

tvāṃ saputraṃ sahabalaṃ hatvā neṣyati māṃ puram/
śrutvā rakṣaḥpatiḥ kruddho jānakyāḥ paruṣākṣaram//
vākyaṃ krodhasamāviṣṭaḥ khaḍgamudyamya satvaraḥ/
hantuṃ janakarājasya tanayāṃ tāmralocanaḥ//

He will kill you along with your sons and take me back to the city (Ayodhya)'. Hearing these stern words of rebuke from Janki (Sita), the demon king Ravana became furious with anger (36). With his eyes

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red with anger, he pulled out his sword to kill the daughter of Janak (Sita) (37).

मन्दोदरी निवार्याह पतिं पतिहिते रता। त्यजैनां मानुषीं दीनां दुःखितां कृपणां कृशाम्।। 38।।
देवगन्धर्वनागानां बह्व्यः सन्ति वराङ्गनाः। त्वामेव वरयन्त्युच्चैर्मदमत्तविलोचनाः।। 39।।

mandodarī nivāryāha patiṃ patihite ratā /
tyajaināṃ mānuṣīṃ dīnāṃ duḥkhitāṃ kṛpaṇāṃ kṛśām //
devagandharvanāgānāṃ bahvyaḥ santī varāṅganāḥ /
tvāmeva varayantyuccairmadamattavilocanāḥ //

Then Mandodari—who was always eager to protect the interest of her husband—intervened. She stopped her husband and said, 'Oh husband! Leave aside this woman who is already distressed and wretched, emaciated and weak, sorrowful, anguished, miserable and tormented (38). There are so many attractive and lustful women proud of their beauty, having enchanting and intoxicated eyes, belonging to the Gods, Gandharvas and Naags who are only too eager and anxious to accept (marry) you (so why do you yearn for this miserable and wretched woman?)' (39).

ततोऽब्रवीद्दशग्रीवो राक्षसीर्विकृताननाः। यथा मे वशगा सीता भविष्यति सकामना।
तथा यतध्वं त्वरितं तर्जनादरणादिभिः।। 40।।
द्विमासाभ्यन्तरे सीता यदि मे वशगा भवेत्। तदा सर्वसुखोपेता राज्यं भोक्ष्यति सा मया।। 41।।
यदि मासद्वयादूर्ध्वं मच्छय्यां नाभिनन्दति। तदा मे प्रातराशाय हत्वा कुरुत मानुषीम्।। 42।।

tato'bravīddaśagrīvo rākṣasīrvikṛtānanāḥ /
yathā me vaśagā sītā bhaviṣyati sakāmanā /
tathā yatadhvaṃ tvaritaṃ tarjanādaraṇādibhiḥ //
dvimāsābhyantare sītā yadi me vaśagā bhavet /
tadā sarvasukhopetā rājyaṃ bhokṣyati sā mayā //
yadi māsadvayādūrdhvaṃ macchayyāṃ nābhinandati /
tadā me prātarāśāya hatvā kuruta mānuṣīm //

Then Ravana ordered many demonesses having formidably terrifying and dreadful bodies, 'Oh Demonesses! Do such things (i.e. try all those methods) by which Sita gets attracted towards me (i.e. desires to have and accept me) and comes under my control and influence—either by use of fear or respectfully with honour (40). If she comes under my control (or yields to me) within two months then she will enjoy the kingdom and be endowed with all happiness and

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comfort (41). On the other hand, if she does not accept to come to my bed within these two months then kill this human being and serve her for my breakfast' (42).

इत्युक्त्वा प्रययौ स्त्रीभी रावणोऽन्तःपुरालयम्। राक्षस्यो जानकीमेत्य भीषयन्त्यः स्वतर्जनैः।। 43।।
तत्रैका जानकीमाह यौवनं ते वृथा गतम्। रावणेन समासाद्य सफलं तु भविष्यति।। 44।।

ityuktvā prayayau strībhī rāvaṇo'ntaḥpurālayam /
rākṣasyo jānakīmetya bhīṣayantyaḥ svatarjanaiḥ //
tatraikā jānakīmāha yauvanaṃ te vṛthā gatam /
rāvaṇena samāsādya saphalaṃ tu bhaviṣyati //

Saying this, Ravana went to his palace along with his women while the demonesses came to Janki (Sita) and started frightening and tormenting her as they thought fit (43). One among them said lewdly, 'Oh Janki! Your youth has gone to waste. If you establish cohabitation relationship with Ravana, it can be beneficial (useful) to you (i.e. you would have put your youth to some good use by enjoying it, instead of frittering it away in sorrows; besides this, you will have to die if you do not yield to the demands of Ravana)' (44).

अपरा चाह कोपेन किं विलम्बेन जानकि। इदानीं छेद्यतामङ्गं विभज्य च पृथक् पृथक्।। 45।।
अन्या तु खड्गमुद्यम्य जानकीं हन्तुमुद्यता। अन्या करालवदना विदार्यास्यमभीषयत्।। 46।।

aparā cāha kopena kiṃ vilambena jānaki /
idānīṃ chedyatāmaṅgaṃ vibhajya ca pṛthak pṛthak //
anyā tu khaḍgamudyamya jānakīṃ hantumudyatā /
anyā karālavadanā vidāryāsyamabhīṣayat //

Another demoness showed her anger and exasperation, and said, 'Oh Janki! Why do you delay and procrastinate further?' Some threatened to cut her body into separate pieces (45), while another drew a sword to kill her. One demoness began to frighten her by opening her terribly frightening mouth menacingly at her (46).

एवं तां भीषयन्तीस्ता राक्षसीर्विकृताननाः। निवार्य त्रिजटा वृद्धा राक्षसी वाक्यमब्रवीत्।। 47।।
शृणुध्वं दुष्टराक्षस्यो मद्वाक्यं वो हितं भवेत्।। 48।।

evaṃ tāṃ bhīṣayantīstā rākṣasīrvikṛtānanāḥ /
nivārya trijaṭā vṛddhā rākṣasī vākyamabravīt //
śṛṇudhvaṃ duṣṭarākṣasyo madvākyaṃ vo hitaṃ bhavet //

Then, when those terrible demonesses were trying to terrify Sita

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into submission, an aged demoness by the name of Trijata stopped them and said (47), 'Oh you wicked demonesses! Listen to what I say—it will be for your own benefit (so you must pay heed to my advise) (48).

न भीषयध्वं रुदतीं नमस्कुरुत जानकीम्। इदानीमेव मे स्वप्ने रामः कमललोचनः।। 49।।
आरुह्यैरावतं शुभ्रं लक्ष्मणेन समागतः। दग्ध्वा लङ्कापुरीं सर्वां हत्वा रावणमाहवे।। 50।।

na bhīṣayadhvaṃ rudatīṃ namaskuruta jānakīm /
idānīmeva me svapne rāmaḥ kamalalocanaḥ //
āruhyairāvataṃ śubhraṃ lakṣmaṇena samāgataḥ /
dagdhvā laṅkāpurīṃ sarvāṃ hatvā rāvaṇamāhave //

Do not scare and torment this harried, weeping and woefully lamenting Janki (Sita) any more, but instead you must bow before her, i.e. show respect and honour to her, pay your obeisance to her. I have seen a dream that the lotus-eyed Sri Ram (49), accompanied by Laxman, has arrived astride a white Eravat elephant. He has burnt the whole city of Lanka and has killed Ravana in a great war (50).

[Note—Eravat elephant is the elephant on which Indra, the king of Gods, rides.]

आरोप्य जानकीं स्वाङ्के स्थितो दृष्टोऽगमूर्धनि। रावणो गोमयह्रदे तैलाभ्यक्तो दिगम्बरः।। 51।।
अगाहत्पुत्रपौत्रैश्च कृत्वा वदनमालिकाम्। विभीषणस्तु रामस्य सन्निधौ हृष्टमानसः।। 52।।

āropya jānakīṃ svāṅke sthito dṛṣṭo'gamūrdhani /
rāvaṇo gomayahrade tailābhyakto digambaraḥ //
agāhatputrapautraiśca kṛtvā vadanamālikām /
vibhīṣaṇastu rāmasya sannidhau hṛṣṭamānasaḥ //

Then I saw that he is sitting on a high mountain top with Janki (Sita) on his lap (i.e. by his side). Ravana is wearing a garland of human skulls, has oil smeared on his body, is naked, and accompanied by his sons and grand sons, is repeatedly plunging himself in a pond of slush made of cow-dung. Vibhishan is sitting near Sri Ram most delightfully with a cheerful heart (51-52).

सेवां करोति रामस्य पादयोर्भक्तिसंयुतः। सर्वथा रावणं रामो हत्वा सकुलमञ्जसा।। 53।।
विभीषणायाधिपत्यं दत्त्वा सीतां शुभाननाम्। अङ्के निधाय स्वपुरीं गमिष्यति न संशयः।। 54।।

sevāṃ karoti rāmasya pādayorbhaktisaṃyutaḥ /
sarvathā rāvaṇaṃ rāmo hatvā sakulamañjasā //

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vibhīṣaṇāyādhipatyaṃ dattvā sītāṃ śubhānanām /
aṅke nidhāya svapurīṃ gamiṣyati na saṃśayaḥ //

He is serving Sri Ram's feet with great devotion. This shows that Sri Ram will kill Ravana and destroy his entire clan (except Vibhishan) (53) and give the kingdom to Vibhishan. Then he will go back to his own city with the auspicious Sita by his side' (54).

[Note :—Verse nos. 49-54 is Trijata's dream. It was a forewarning or precursor of what was to come in the following days.]

त्रिजटाया वचः श्रुत्वा भीतास्ता राक्षसस्त्रियः। तूष्णीमासंस्तत्र तत्र निद्रावशमुपागताः।। 55।।
तर्जिता राक्षसीभिः सा सीता भीतातिविह्वला। त्रातारं नाधिगच्छन्ती दुःखेन परिमूर्च्छिता।। 56।।

trijaṭāyā vacaḥ śrutvā bhītāstā rākṣasastriyaḥ /
tūṣṇīmāsaṃstatra tatra nidrāvaśamupāgatāḥ //
tarjitā rākṣasībhiḥ sā sītā bhītātivihvalā /
trātāraṃ nādhigacchantī duḥkhena parimūrcchitā //

Hearing these words of Trijata, the demonesses became extremely frightened. They sat down quietly, and after sometime, they all fell asleep (55). Sita was so terrified at the aggressive and threatening postures and behaviour of the demonesses that when they quietened down and fell asleep, she fainted due to mental exhaustion and physical fatigue because she saw no succour and help forthcoming that could end her horrors, torments, sorrows, anguish, troubles and tribulations (56).

अश्रुभिः पूर्णनयना चिन्तयन्तीदमब्रवीत्। प्रभाते भक्षयिष्यन्ति राक्षस्यो मां न संशयः।
इदानीमेव मरणं केनोपायेन मे भवेत्।। 57।।

aśrubhiḥ pūrṇanayanā cintayantīdamabravīt /
prabhāte bhakṣayiṣyanti rākṣasyo māṃ na saṃśayaḥ /
idānīmeva marṇaṃ kenopāyena me bhavet //

When she regained her consciousness, she became very worried and perturbed, and said with tearful eyes to Trijata, 'There is no doubt that the demonesses would eat me up as soon as it is day break. What is the way that I can die now (instead of being killed by them)?' (57).

एवं सुदुःखेन परिप्लुता सा विमुक्तकण्ठं रुदती चिराय।
आलम्ब्य शाखां कृतनिश्चया मृतौ न जानती कञ्चिदुपायमङ्गना।। 58।।

evaṃ suduḥkhena pariplutā sā vimuktakaṇṭha rudatī cirāya /
ālambya śākhāṃ kṛtaniścayā mṛtau na jānatī kaścidupāyamaṅganā //

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Having thus decided to end her life but finding no way to do it, the most auspicious Sita caught hold of the branch of a tree and wept very bitterly and profusely for a long time (58).

[Note :—We really empathise with Sita. Even the hardened of souls is moved to pity at her precarious and miserable condition. This last verse no. 58 is the climax for her sorrows, miseries, anguish and torments, for in the next Canto, Hanuman appears before her and gives that proverbial 'breath of life' to her bemoaning and distressed soul. No wonder then that Sita felt so overwhelmed with gratitude that she blessed him with all the possible boons with utmost sincerity at her command. And no wonder also that he was the most favourite of her for the rest of her life. What more can a mother expect from her son, and a son from his mother? Hanuman gave her a new lease of life and burnt Lanka as reprisal and to settle scores with Ravana even before the Lord could punish the demons for their sins and misdeeds, and surely this deed of Hanuman must have given much satisfaction to Sita and she would have felt satisfied when she saw the city burning and being reduced to ashes. And that is why Hanuman was called a 'son' by her; see next Canto 3, verse no. 63. On the other hand, Hanuman's happiness must have been immeasurable when he could successfully redeem the agonies being suffered by his 'mother' when he could find her and help the Lord punish her tormentors. Surely enough, a mother loves that son more than anyone else who comes to her rescue when she is in great trouble.]

***

Sundar Kand — Canto 3

Hanuman meets Sita; Destruction of Ashok grove; Hanuman's capture by the demons

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

उद्बन्धनेन वा मोक्ष्ये शरीरं राघवं विना। जीवितेन फलं किं स्यान्मम रक्षोऽधिमध्यतः ।।1।।
दीर्घा वेणी ममात्यर्थमुद्बन्धाय भविष्यति। एवं निश्चितबुद्धिं तां मरणायाथ जानकीम् ।।2।।
विलोक्य हनुमान्किञ्चिद्विचार्यैतदभाषत। शनैः शनैः सूक्ष्मरूपो जानक्याः श्रोत्रगं वचः ।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

udbandhanena vā mokṣye śarīraṃ rāghavaṃ vinā /
jīvitena phalaṃ kiṃ syānmama rakṣo'dhimadhyataḥ //
dīrghā veṇī mamātyarthamudbandhāya bhaviṣyati /
evaṃ niścitabuddhiṃ tāṃ maraṇāyātha jānakīm //

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vilokya hanumānkiñcidvicāryaitadabhāṣata /
śanaiḥ śanaiḥ sūkṣmarūpo jānakyāḥ śrotragaṃ vacaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! In this way, the lamenting and weeping Sita thought in despair, 'Why not I kill myself by hanging and get rid of my torments? What is the use of living amongst these wicked demons without Raghav (Sri Ram)? (1). My long plait of hairs is sufficient to hang myself with'. Observing that Janki (Sita) has decided to kill herself (by hanging or any other means) (2), the miniature Hanuman thought of something in his heart and said slowly in a soft voice but loud enough to reach Sita's ears (3).

इक्ष्वाकुवंशसम्भूतो राजा दशरथो महान्। अयोध्याधिपतिस्तस्य चत्वारो लोकविश्रुताः ।। 4 ।।
पुत्रा देवसमाः सर्वे लक्षणैरुपलक्षिताः। रामश्च लक्ष्मणश्चैव भरतश्चैव शत्रुहा ।। 5 ।।

ikṣvākuvaṃśasambhūto rājā daśaratho mahān /
ayodhyādhipatistasya catvāro lokaviśrutāḥ //
putrā devasamāḥ sarve lakṣaṇairupalakṣitāḥ /
rāmasyalakṣmaṇaścaiva bharataścaiva śatruhā //

'King Dashrath, who was born in the exalted family of king Ikshwaku, was very renowned and virtuous. To him were born four sons who are renowned in all the three worlds (celestial, terrestrial and subterranean) (4). Those sons are as auspicious and divine as Gods and are endowed with all the auspicious, divine, noble and virtuous characters like them. Their names are Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan (5).

ज्येष्ठो रामः पितुर्वाक्याद्दण्डकारण्यमागतः। लक्ष्मणेन सह भ्रात्रा सीतया भार्यया सह ।। 6 ।।
उवास गौतमीतीरे पञ्चवट्यां महामनाः। तत्र नीता महाभागा सीता जनकनन्दिनी ।। 7 ।।

jyeṣṭho rāmaḥ piturvākyāddaṇḍakāraṇyamāgataḥ /
lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātā sītayā bhāryayā saha //
uvāsa gautamītīre pañcavaṭyāṃ mahāmanāḥ /
tatra nītā mahābhāgā sītā janakanandinī //

The eldest son Sri Ram came to the Dandakaranya forest along with his brother Laxman and wife Sita on the orders of his father (6). That exalted one (Sri Ram) stayed at Panchvati on the banks of river Gautami with the most fortunate and great daughter of Janak, Sita (7).

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रहिते रामचन्द्रेण रावणेन दुरात्मना। ततो रामोऽतिदुःखार्तो मार्गमाणोऽथ जानकीम्।।8।।
जटायुषं पक्षिराजमपश्यत्पतितं भुवि। तस्मै दत्त्वा दिवं शीघ्रमृष्यमूकमुपागमत्।।9।।

rahite rāmacandreṇa rāvaṇena durātmanāḥ/
tato rāmo'tiduḥkhārto mārgamāṇo'tha jānakīm//
jaṭāyuṣaṃ pakṣirājamapaśyatpatitaṃ bhuvi/
tasmai dattvā divaṃ śīghramṛṣyamūkamupāgamat//

When Sri Ram was not there, the evil hearted and wicked Ravana took away Janki (Sita). Then Sri Ram was overwhelmed with sorrows and anguish of separation, and while searching for her here and there in the wild forest (8), he saw Jatau, the king of birds, lying wounded on the ground. He immediately sent him to the divine abode of Gods (i.e. heaven). Then he (Sri Ram) came to the Rishyamook mountain (9).

सुग्रीवेण कृता मैत्री रामस्य विदितात्मनः। तद्भार्याहारिणं हत्वा वालिनं रघुनन्दनः।।10।।
राज्येऽभिषिच्य सुग्रीवं मित्रकार्यं चकार सः। सुग्रीवस्तु समानाप्य वानरान्वानरप्रभुः।।11।।
प्रेषयामास परितो वानरान्परिमार्गणे। सीतायास्तत्र चैकोऽहं सुग्रीवसचिवो हरिः।।12।।

sugrīveṇa kṛtā maitrī rāmasya viditātmanaḥ/
tadbhāryāhāriṇaṃ hatvā vālinaṃ raghunandanaḥ//
rājye'bhiṣicya sugrīvaṃ mitrakāryaṃ cakāra saḥ/
sugrīvastu samānāpya vānarānvānaraprabhuḥ//
preṣayāmāsa parito vānarānparimārgaṇe/
sītāyāstatra caiko'haṃ sugrīvasacivo hariḥ//

Coming there, the sagacious, erudite, enlightened and wise Sri Ram made friends with Sugriv. Then Raghunandan (Sri Ram) killed Vaali who had stolen his (Sugriv's) wife (10) and installed Sugriv on the throne of Kishkindha. In this manner, he successfully did the work of his friend Sugriv. (Similarly, Sugriv reciprocated his gesture by promising to search for Sita.) Sugriv also summoned all the monkeys for the Lord's work (11) and sent them in all the directions in search of Sita. Out of those monkeys, I am one of Sugriv's ministers (12).

सम्पातिवचनाच्छीघ्रमुल्लङ्घ्य शतयोजनम्।
समुद्रं नगरीं लङ्कां विचिन्वञ्जानकीं शुभाम्।।13।।
शनैरशोकवनिकां विचिन्वञ् शिंशपातरुम्।
अद्राक्षं जानकीमत्र शोचन्तीं दुःखसम्प्लुताम्।।14।।

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रामस्य महिषीं देवीं कृतकृत्योऽहमागतः। इत्युक्त्वोपररामाथ मारुतिर्बुद्धिमत्तरः।।15।।

sampātivacanācchīghramullaṅghya śatayojanam /
samudraṃ nagarīṃ laṅkāṃ vicinvañjānakīṃ śubhām //
śanairaśokavanikāṃ vicinvañ śiṃśapātarum /
adrākṣaṃ jānakīmatra śocaṃtīṃ duḥkhasamplutām //
rāmasya mahiṣīṃ devīṃ kṛtakṛtyo'hamāgataḥ /
ityuktvopararāmātha mārutirbuddhimattaraḥ //

I leapt across the ocean, which is a hundred Yojans (800 miles) wide, on the advice of Sampati and have come to Lanka. Here, I searched all over the place for Janki (Sita), the auspicious and virtuous one (13). Gradually, while searching for her in the Ashok grove, I saw this Shinshupa (Indian red wood) tree. Here I saw (found) Janki lamenting and grieving gloomily in contrition, remorse and anguish (14). By seeing the goddess who is the consort of Sri Ram, the purpose of my coming here has been successfully accomplished and my efforts have been amply rewarded'. Saying so, the most wise, sagacious, erudite and intelligent son of the Wind God, Hanuman became silent (15).

सीता क्रमेण तत्सर्वं श्रुत्वा विस्मयमाययौ। किमिदं मे श्रुतं व्योम्नि वायुना समुदीरितम्।।16।।
स्वप्नो वा मे मनोभ्रान्तिर्यदि वा सत्यमेव तत्।
निद्रा मे नास्ति दुःखेन जानाम्येतत्कुतो भ्रमः।।17।।
येन मे कर्णपीयूषं वचनं समुदीरितम्। स दृश्यतां महाभागः प्रियवादी ममाग्रतः।।18।।

sītā krameṇa tatsarvaṃ śrutvā vismayamāyayau /
kimidaṃ me śrutaṃ vyomni vāyunā samudīritam //
svapno vā me manobhrāntiryadi vā satyameva tat /
nidrā me nāsti duḥkhena jānāmyetatkuto bhramaḥ //
yena me karṇapīyūṣaṃ vacanaṃ samudīritam /
sa dṛśyatāṃ mahābhāgaḥ priyavādī mamāgrataḥ //

Hearing this sequence of events, Sita was extremely amazed and astonished. She wondered, 'The words which I have heard in the sky, have they been spoken by the wind? (16). Or is it a dream, or is it my hallucination or imagination? Or is it all true? Since I cannot sleep due to overwhelming sorrows, extreme anguish, mental torments and agitations, therefore it cannot be a dream. On the other hand, I can actually hear those words by my own ears, so it cannot be the flight of

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my imagination (17). That person who has spoken these sweet, pleasant, most reassuring and comforting words to me—words which appear like nectar for my ears—I request that great soul to appear before me (or make himself visible to me)' (18).

श्रुत्वा तज्जानकीवाक्यं हनुमान्पत्रखण्डतः। अवतीर्य शनैः सीतापुरतः समवस्थितः॥19॥
कलविङ्कप्रमाणाङ्गो रक्तास्यः पीतवानरः। ननाम शनकैः सीतां प्राञ्जलिः पुरतः स्थितः॥20॥

śrutvā tajjānakīvākyaṃ hanumānpatrakhaṇḍataḥ /
avatīrya śanaiḥ sītāpurataḥ samavasthitaḥ //
kalaviṅkapramāṇāṅgo raktāsyaḥ pītavānaraḥ /
nanāma śanakaiḥ sītāṃ prāñjalīḥ purataḥ sthitaḥ //

Hearing these words of Janki (Sita), Hanuman emerged from behind the cover of foliage and came down slowly, and stood before her (19). At that moment he had the form of a monkey with the size of the bird 'Kalwink' (house sparrow) with a reddish colour of the body and a golden radiance. He came slowly in front of Sita and bowed before her with palms joined together in submission (20).

[Note :—The words slowly, gradually, on tip-toes etc. shows that (i) Hanuman did not wish to startle Sita by any swift or aggressive moves because any such movement would have made her more nervous and terrified for she was already on the edge, with taut nerves on the brink and almost on the verge of a breakdown. (ii) It would also have alerted the demonesses surrounding Sita who were by this time fast asleep, as well as the guards of the garden—see Canto 2, verse no. 55.]

दृष्ट्वा तं जानकी भीता रावणोऽयमुपागतः। मां मोहयितुमायातो मायया वानराकृतिः॥21॥
इत्येवं चिन्तयित्वा सा तूष्णीमासीदधोमुखी। पुनरप्याह तां सीतां देवि यत्त्वं विशङ्कसे॥22॥
नाहं तथाविधो मातस्त्यज शङ्कां मयि स्थिताम्।
दासोऽहं कोसलेन्द्रस्य रामस्य परमात्मनः॥23॥
सचिवोऽहं हरीन्द्रस्य सुग्रीवस्य शुभप्रदे। वायोः पुत्रोऽहमखिलप्राणभूतस्य शोभने॥24॥

dṛṣṭvā taṃ jānakī bhītā rāvaṇo'yamupāgataḥ /
māṃ mohayitumāyāto māyayā vānarākṛtiḥ //
ityevaṃ cintayitvā sā tūṣṇīmāsīdadhomukhī /
punarapyāha tāṃ sītāṃ devi yattvaṃ viśaṅkase //
nāhaṃ tathāvidho mātastyaja śaṅkāṃ mayi sthitām /
dāso'haṃ kosalendrasya rāmasya paramātmanaḥ //
sacivo'haṃ harindrasya sugrīvasya śubhaprade /
vāyoḥ putro'hamakhilaprāṇabhūtasya śobhane //

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Seeing him, Janki was afraid that Ravana has come disguised as a monkey to trap her (21). Thinking thus, she kept sitting with a bowed face. Then he (Hanuman) said once again to Sita, 'Oh goddess! I am not the one whom you suspect me to be. Oh mother! Whatever suspicions and doubts you have about me, you must remove them. I am a humble servant of Sri Ram, the supreme soul called Parmatma, who has manifested as the king of Kaushal (Ayodhya) (22-23). Oh the bestower of auspiciousness and welfares! I am a minister of the king of monkeys, Sugriv. Oh the adorable and worthy one! I am the son of the Wind God who is the life giving and life sustaining force for the whole world' (24).

तच्छ्रुत्वा जानकी प्राह हनूमन्तं कृताञ्जलिम्। वानराणां मनुष्याणां सङ्गतिर्घटते कथम्।। 25।।
यथा त्वं रामचन्द्रस्य दासोऽहमिति भाषसे। तामाह मारुतिः प्रीतो जानकीं पुरतः स्थितः।। 26।।

tacchrutvā jānakī prāha hanūmantaṃ kṛtāñjalim/
vānarāṇāṃ manuṣyāṇāṃ saṅgatirghaṭate katham//
yathā tvaṃ rāmacandrasya dāso'hamiti bhāṣase/
tāmāha mārutiḥ prīto jānakīṃ puratah sthitah//

Hearing this, Janki said to Hanuman who was standing in front of her with palms joined together in submission, 'That you say you are a servant (subordinate, follower, devotee) of Sri Ramchandra—say, how is it possible that a monkey and a human can become friends and companions?' Then Hanuman, who was standing in front of her, replied to her most cheerfully (25-26)—

ऋष्यमूकमगाद्रामः शबर्या नोदितः सुधीः। सुग्रीवो ऋष्यमूकस्थो दृष्टवान् रामलक्ष्मणौ।। 27।।
भीतो मां प्रेषयामास ज्ञातुं रामस्य हृद्गतम्। ब्रह्मचारिवपुर्धृत्वा गतोऽहं रामसन्निधिम्।। 28।।

ṛṣyamūkamagādrāmah śabaryā noditah sudhīh/
sugrīvo ṛṣyamūkastho dṛṣṭavān rāmalakṣmaṇau//
bhīto māṃ preṣayāmāsa jñātuṃ rāmasya hṛdgatam/
brahmacārivapurdhṛtvā gato'haṃ rāmasannidhim//

'At the instance of Shabari, the most wise, erudite and sagacious one (Sri Ram) came to the Rishyamook mountain. Sugriv, who was sitting atop the Rishyamook mountain, saw Sri Ram and Laxman approach (27). He was scared and sent me to find out the cause (reason) of their arrival. Then I came near Sri Ram disguised as a Brahmachari (a celibate Brahmin) (28).

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ज्ञात्वा रामस्य सद्भावं स्कन्धोपरि निधाय तौ। नीत्वा सुग्रीवसामीप्यं सख्यं चाकरवं तयोः।।29।।
सुग्रीवस्य हृता भार्या वालिना तं रघूत्तमः। जघानैकेन बाणेन ततो राज्येऽभ्यषेचयत्।।30।।
सुग्रीवं वानराणां स प्रेषयामास वानरान्। दिग्भ्यो महाबलान्वीरान् भवत्याः परिमार्गणे।।31।।

jñātvā rāmasya sadbhāvaṃ skandhopari nidhāya tau/
nītvā sugrīvasāmīpyaṃ sakhyaṃ cākaravaṃ tayoḥ//
sugrīvasya hṛtā bhāryā vālinā taṃ raghuttamaḥ/
jaghānaikena bāṇena tato rājye'bhyaṣecayat//
sugrīvaṃ vānarāṇāṃ sa preṣayāmāsa vānarān/
digbhyo mahābalānvīrān bhavatyāḥ parimārgaṇe//

When I found out about the purity and sincerity of his purpose (i.e. that he had no ill-will or malefic intentions against Sugriv and had a friendly disposition for us, and at the same time was himself under troubles), I took them to Sugriv on my shoulders and befriended them to him (29). Sugriv's wife had been forcibly usurped (snatched, stolen) by Vaali. The most exalted in king Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) killed the latter by a single arrow and installed (anointed) Sugriv on the throne (30). After that, Sugriv sent very brave, strong and most valorous monkeys in all the directions in search of you (31).

गच्छन्तं राघवो दृष्ट्वा मामभाषत सादरम्।।32।।
त्वयि कार्यमशेषं मे स्थितं मारुतनन्दन। ब्रूहि मे कुशलं सर्वं सीतायै लक्ष्मणस्य च।।33।।
अङ्गुलीयकमेतन्मे परिज्ञानार्थमुत्तमम्। सीतायै दीयतां साधु मन्नामाक्षरमुद्रितम्।।34।।

gacchantaṃ rāghavo dṛṣṭvā māmabhāṣata sādaram//
tvayi kāryamaśeṣaṃ me sthitaṃ mārutanandana/
brūhi me kuśalaṃ sarvaṃ sītāyai lakṣmaṇasya ca//
aṅgulīyakametanme parijñānārthamuttamam/
sītāyai dīyatāṃ sādhu mannāmākṣaramudritam//

When I was ready to start off in your search, Raghav (Sri Ram) saw me and said (32), 'Oh Maruti's son! All my work, which is very difficult and special, is dependent on you. Tell Sita about my and Laxman's welfare (33). For your identification I am giving you this beautiful finger ring of mine on which the letters of my name are etched/engraved so that Sita will recognise you' (34).

इत्युक्त्वा प्रददौ मह्यं कराग्रादङ्गुलीयकम्। प्रयत्नेन मयानीतं देवि पश्याङ्गुलीयकम्।।35।।
इत्युक्त्वा प्रददौ देव्यै मुद्रिकां मारुतात्मजः। नमस्कृत्य स्थितो दूराद्बद्धाञ्जलिपुटो हरिः।।36।।

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दृष्ट्वा सीता प्रमुदिता रामनामाङ्कितां तदा। मुद्रिकां शिरसा धृत्वा स्रवदानन्दनेत्रजा।।37।।

ityuktvā pradadau mahyaṃ karāgrādaṅgulīyakam/
prayatnena mayānītaṃ devi paśyāṅgulīyakam//
ityuktvā pradadau devyai mudrikāṃ mārutātmajaḥ/
namaskṛtya sthito dūrādbaddhāñjaliputo hariḥ//
dṛṣṭvā sītā pramuditā rāmanāmāṅkitāṃ tadā/
mudrikāṃ śirasā dhṛtvā sravadānandanetrajā//

Saying this, Sri Ram took off the ring from his finger and gave it to me. I have brought it very carefully. Oh goddess! You see this ring for yourself' (35). Saying so, the son of the Wind God gave that ring to the goddess (Sita). Then he bowed to her and stood aside at a little distance from her (36). Sita was most exhilarated and exceedingly glad at seeing that ring with Sri Ram's name inscribed on it. She put it to her head (in reverence and honour) and tears of joy flowed down from her eyes (37).

कपे मे प्राणदाता त्वं बुद्धिमानसि राघवे। भक्तोऽसि प्रियकारी त्वं विश्वासोऽस्ति तवैव हि।।38।।
नो चेन्मत्सन्निधिं चान्यं पुरुषं प्रेषयेत्कथम्। हनूमन्दृष्टमखिलं मम दुःखादिकं त्वया।।39।।
सर्वं कथय रामाय यथा मे जायते दया। मासद्वयावधि प्राणाः स्थास्यन्ति मम सत्तम।।40।।

kape me prāṇadātā tvaṃ buddhimānasi rāghave/
bhakto'si priyakarī tvaṃ viśvāso'sti tavaiva hi//
no cenmatsannidhiṃ cānyaṃ puruṣaṃ preṣayetkatham/
hanūmandṛṣṭamakhilaṃ mama duḥkhādikaṃ tvayā//
sarvaṃ kathaya rāmāya yathā me jāyate dayā/
māsadvayāvadhi prāṇāḥ sthāsyanti mama sattama//

Then she said, 'Oh monkey! You are my saviour (i.e. you have saved me from drowning in an ocean of grief and sorrows). You are very wise, clever and intelligent, a devotee of Raghav (Sri Ram), and most dear to him. I am certain he has full faith/trust in you (38). If that had not been the case, why would he have sent a non-related male to me (as his messenger)? Oh Hanuman! You have seen all my horrible miseries, intolerable agonies, grave troubles and insurmountable tribulations (39). Tell all these things to Sri Ram so that he develops mercy and compassion for me. Oh the most exalted one! My life will survive for only two months more (40).

नागमिष्यति चेद्रामो भक्षयिष्यति मां खलः। अतः शीघ्रं कपीन्द्रेण सुग्रीवेण समन्वितः।।41।।
वानरानीकपैः सार्धं हत्वा रावणमाहवे। सपुत्रं सबलं रामो यदि मां मोचयेत्प्रभुः।।42।।

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nāgamiṣyati cedrāmo bhakṣayiṣyati māṃ khalaḥ /
ataḥ śīghraṃ kapīndreṇa sugrīveṇa samanvitaḥ //
vānarānīkapaiḥ sārdhaṃ hatvā rāvaṇamāhave /
saputraṃ sabalaṃ rāmo yadi māṃ mocayetprabhuḥ //

If this does not happen (i.e. if Sri Ram does not save me within the stipulated two months time), this wicked rascal will eat me up. Hence, it is very urgent that accompanied by Sugriv and other chief monkeys (41), Lord Ram should kill Ravana along with his sons and army before that stipulated time and liberate me (42).

तत्तस्य सदृशं वीर्यं वीर वर्णय वर्णितम्। यथा मां तारयेद्रामो हत्वा शीघ्रं दशाननम्।। 43।।
तथा यतस्व हनुमन्वाचा धर्ममवाप्नुहि। हनूमानपि तामाह देवि दृष्टो यथा मया।।44।।
रामः सलक्ष्मणः शीघ्रमागमिष्यति सायुधः। सुग्रीवेण ससैन्येन हत्वा दशमुखं बलात्।।45।।

tattasya sadṛśyaṃ vīryaṃ vīra varṇaya varṇitam /
yathā māṃ tārayedrāmo hatvā śīghraṃ daśānanam //
tathā yatasva hanumanvācā dharmamavāpnuhi /
hanūmānapi tāmāha devi dṛṣṭo yathā mayā //
rāmaḥ salakṣmaṇaḥ śīghramāgamiṣyati sāyudhaḥ /
sugrīveṇa sasainyena hatvā daśamukhaṃ balāt //

If it so materializes, then his efforts would be successful, and only then you could describe his valour and fame as you have done just now. [Sita refers to the killing of Vaali and restoring Sugriv's wife to him.] You should tell him all that you have seen with such tact and deftness that he gets angry and kills the 10-headed (Ravana) and liberate me soon (43). And by doing so, you shall also benefit from the auspicious effects of the verbal good deed that you would have done. [If your clever and deft use of words could sufficiently inspire and impel Sri Ram to act expeditiously and kill Ravana before he kills me, you will be blessed with the reward of righteous and judicious use of your words to save my life]'.

Then Hanuman said to her, 'Oh goddess! What I have observed shows that (44) Sri Ram along with Laxman, both armed and well prepared, and accompanied by Sugriv and his army, shall come very soon. He shall then forcibly kill the 10-headed Ravana (45).

समानेष्यति देवि त्वामयोध्यां नात्र संशयः। तमाह जानकी रामः कथं वारिधिमाततम्।। 46।।
तीर्त्वायास्यत्यमेयात्मा वानरानीकपैः सह। हनूमानाह मे स्कन्धावारुह्य पुरुषर्षभौ।।47।।

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samāneṣyati devi tvāmayodhyāṃ nātra saṃśayaḥ /
tamāha jānakī rāmaḥ kathaṃ vāridhimātatam //
tīrtvāyāsyatyameyātmā vānarānīkapaiḥ saha /
hanūmānāha me skandhāvāruhya puruṣarṣabhau //

He shall (after having killed Ravana) take you back to Ayodhya. Oh goddess, there is no doubt about it'.

At this, Janki (Sita) asked, 'How will Sri Ram, who has a measureless and infinite body, cross the ocean along with the huge army of monkeys. [Sri Ram has a vast form as Viraat Purush. In the incarnation as a mendicant dwarf (Vaaman) he had measured the whole earth in a single step, so what does this ocean count for him. But the dilemma is that he is currently playing his role as a human being and would be accompanied by a large army of monkeys. How will he cross the ocean with them in his present role?'].

Hanuman replied, 'Those two exalted ones (literally, the most excellent amongst men) shall come here astride my shoulders (46-47).

आयास्यतः ससैन्यश्च सुग्रीवो वानरेश्वरः। विहायसा क्षणेनैव तीर्त्वा वारिधिमाततम्।। 48।।
निर्दहिष्यति रक्षौघांस्त्वत्कृते नात्र संशयः। अनुज्ञां देहि मे देवि गच्छामि त्वरयान्वितः।। 49।।
द्रष्टुं रामं सह भ्रात्रा त्वरयामि तवान्तिकम्। देवि किञ्चिदभिज्ञानं देहि मे येन राघवः।। 50।।

āyāsyataḥ sasainyaśca sugrīvo vānareśvaraḥ /
vihāyasā kṣaṇenaiva tīrtvā vāridhimātatam //
nirdahiṣyati rakṣaughāṃstvatkṛte nātra saṃśayaḥ /
anujñāṃ dehi me devi gacchāmi tvarayānvitaḥ //
draṣṭuṃ rāmaṃ saha bhrātā tvarayāmi tavāntikam /
devi kiñcidabhijñānaṃ dehi me yena rāghavaḥ //

As for Sugriv, the king of monkeys, he shall cross the vast ocean by the air-route (the sky path) along with his army in a moment (i.e. in a very short time) (48). Then he shall reduce to ashes and crush the entire horde of demons in order to recover/retrieve you. There is no doubt about it. Oh goddess! Now give me permission; I shall go back forthwith (49) and see (meet) Sri Ram and try to bring him along with his brother as soon as I can. Oh goddess! Give me some token (so that Sri Ram is convinced that I have met you) (50).

विश्वसेन्मां प्रयत्नेन ततो गन्ता समुत्सुकः। ततः किञ्चिद्विचार्याथ सीता कमललोचना।। 51।।
विमुच्य केशपाशान्ते स्थितं चूडामणिं ददौ। अनेन विश्वसेद्रामस्त्वां कपीन्द्र सलक्ष्मणः।। 52।।

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viśvasenmāṃ prayatnena tato gantā samutsukaḥ /
tataḥ kiñcidvicāryātha sītā kamalalocanā //
vimucya keśapāśānte sthitaṃ cūḍāmaṇiṃ dadau /
anena viśvasedrāmastvāṃ kapīndra salakṣmaṇaḥ //

That will help Sri Ram believe me. I will take it with me very carefully and approach him most eagerly, with sincerity of purpose and urgency'.

Then the lotus-eyed Sita thought for sometime (and pondered over what to give him) (51). Then she took off the 'Chudamani' tucked in her hairs and gave it to him. [Chudamani is an ornament worn by ladies in the hair, much like a hair pin.] She said to Hanuman, 'Oh the king of monkeys! By this Sri Ram and Laxman will believe you (52).

अभिज्ञानार्थमन्यच्च वदामि तव सुव्रत। चित्रकूटगिरौ पूर्वमेकदा रहसि स्थितः।
मदङ्के शिर आधाय निद्राति रघुनन्दनः।।53।।
ऐन्द्रः काकस्तदागत्य नखैस्तुण्डेन चासकृत्। मत्पादाङ्गुष्ठमारक्तं विददारामिषाशया।।54।।

abhijñānārthamanyacca vadāmi tava suvrata /
citrakūṭagirau pūrvamekadā rahasi sthitaḥ /
madaṅke śira ādhāya nidrāti raghunandanaḥ //
aindraḥ kākastadāgatya nakhaistuṇḍena cāsakṛt /
matpādāṅguṣṭhamāraktaṃ vidadārāmiṣāśayā //

Oh the one who is steadfast and truthful to the righteous vows made by him in good earnest! I am telling you one more secret to make him (Sri Ram) believe you. Once, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) was sleeping with his head on my lap while alone during our sojourn on the Chitrakoot mountains (53). Just at that time, the son of Indra (named Jayant) came down disguised as a crow, and mistakenly thinking the red great toe of my foot to be a piece of meat, he tore at (lacerated and injured) it with his beaks and claws (54).

[Note :—It must be noted that Sita did not move her legs even a fraction nor raised any alarm while the crow was poking and nibbling at her toe because that would have disturbed the sleep of Sri Ram. This is a great testimony of her love, devotion, sense of duty and submission towards the comfort and service of Sri Ram. She preferred to suffer than to wake up the Lord from his peaceful slumber.]

ततो रामः प्रबुद्ध्याथ दृष्ट्वा पादं कृतव्रणम्। केन भद्रे कृतं चैतद्विप्रियं मे दुरात्मना।।55।।
इत्युक्त्वा पुरतोऽपश्यद्वायसं मां पुनः पुनः। अभिद्रवन्तं रक्ताक्तनखतुण्डं चुकोप ह।।56।।

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tato rāmaḥ prabuddhyātha dṛṣṭvā pādaṃ kṛtavraṇanam /
kene bhadre kṛtaṃ caitadvipriyaṃ me durātmanā //
ityuktvā pūrato'paśyadvāyasaṃ māṃ punaḥ punaḥ /
abhidravantaṃ raktāktanakhatuṇḍaṃ cukopa ha //

When Sri Ram gained consciousness (i.e. woke up from his sleep) and saw the wound in my leg, he enquired, 'Oh dear! Which wicked and evil soul has done this harm (offence) to me willingly' (55).

Even as he was saying so, he watched the crow coming repeatedly near me. Its claws and beak were smeared with blood. He became very peeved, angry and exasperated on seeing it (56).

तृणमेकमुपादाय दिव्यास्त्रेणाभियोज्य तत्। चिक्षेप लीलया रामो वायसोपरि तज्ज्वलत्।। 57 ।।
अभ्यद्रवद्वायसश्च भीतो लोकान् भ्रमन्पुनः। इन्द्रब्रह्मादिभिश्चापि न शक्यो रक्षितुं तदा।। 58 ।।
रामस्य पादयोरग्रेऽपतद्भीत्या दयानिधेः। शरणागतमालोक्य रामस्तमिदमब्रवीत्।। 59 ।।

tṛṇamekamupādāya divyāstreṇābhiyojya tat /
cikṣepa līlayā rāmo vāyasopari tajjvalat //
abhyadravadvāyasaśca bhīto lokān bhramanpunaḥ /
indrabrahmādibhiścāpi na śakyo rakṣituṃ tadā //
rāmasya pādayoragre'patadbhītyā dayānidheḥ /
śaraṇāgatamālokya rāmastamidamabravīt //

He angrily picked up a blade of grass, empowered (activated) it with the potent of a divine weapon, and almost playfully and casually threw (shot) that live weapon (or an activated missile or arrow) at him (57).

Then the crow became terrified and ran for his life in all the worlds, but in vain. When he could not find any protection or succour even with Indra (his father), Lord Brahma (the creator) etc. (58), he came and fell down at the feet of Sri Ram, petrified with mortal fear. Sri Ram, who is a treasury of mercy and compassion, saw him lying at his feet seeking mercy and shelter. He said (59)—

अमोघमेतदस्त्रं मे दत्त्वैकाक्षमितो व्रज। सव्यं दत्त्वा गतः काक एवं पौरुषवानपि।। 60 ।।
उपेक्षते किमर्थं मामिदानीं सोऽपि राघवः। हनूमानपि तामाह श्रुत्वा सीतानुभाषितम्।। 61 ।।
देवि त्वां यदि जानाति स्थितामत्र रघूत्तमः। करिष्यति क्षणाद्भस्म लङ्कां राक्षसमण्डिताम्।। 62 ।।

amoghametadastraṃ me dattvaikākṣamito vraja /
savyaṃ dattvā gataḥ kāka evaṃ pauruṣavānapi //

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upekṣate kimarthaṃ māmidānīṃ so'pi rāghavaḥ /
hanūmānapi tāmāha śrutvā sītānubhāṣitam //
devi tvāṃ yadi jānāti sthitāmatra raghūttamaḥ /
kariṣyati kṣaṇādbhasma laṅkāṃ rākṣasamaṇḍitām //

'My weapon is infallible. So sacrifice (or give) one of your eyes and go away from here'. [The Lord implied that since you have cast an evil eye on Sita, you must sacrifice it in order to atone for your sins.]

Then that crow gave (offered) its left eye and went away from there. He (Sri Ram) is so potent, valorous and manly! (60).Why is Raghav (Sri Ram) neglecting me now, why is he indifferent and apathetic towards me and not interested in me now?'

Hearing these words of Sita, Hanuman replied (61), 'Oh goddess! As soon as the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) comes to know of your location, then he shall lose no time to turn to ashes (burn) this Lanka which is adorned (i.e. infested, inhabited) by demons (62).

जानकी प्राह तं वत्स कथं त्वं योत्स्यसेऽसुरैः। अतिसूक्ष्मवपुः सर्वे वानराश्च भवादृशाः।। 63।।
श्रुत्वा तद्वचनं देव्यै पूर्वरूपमदर्शयत्। मेरुमन्दरसङ्काशं रक्षोगणविभीषणम्।।64।।

jānakī prāha taṃ vatsa kathaṃ tvaṃ yotsyase'suraiḥ /
atisūkṣmavapuḥ sarve vānarāśca bhavādṛśā //
śrutvā tadvacanaṃ devyai pūrvarūpamadarśayat /
merumandarasaṅkāśaṃ rakṣogaṇavibhīṣaṇam //

Janki said, 'Oh son! You have a very miniature body. How will you then fight the colossus demons? All other monkeys must be small like you, aren't they? (63).

Hearing these words (expressing doubt) from the goddess (Sita), Hanuman showed his original, colossus and awe inspiring form which was as large as mounts Meru and Mandar, and which could create and instill great terror and fear among the demons (64).

दृष्ट्वा सीता हनूमन्तं महापर्वतसन्निभम्। हर्षेण महताविष्टा प्राह तं कपिकुञ्जरम्।।65।।
समर्थोऽसि महासत्त्व द्रक्ष्यन्ति त्वां महाबलम्। राक्षस्यस्ते शुभः पन्था गच्छ रामान्तिकं द्रुतम्।।66।।

dṛṣṭvā sītā hanumantaṃ mahāparvatasannibham /
harṣeṇa mahatāviṣṭā prāha taṃ kapikuñjaram //
samartho'si mahāsattva drakṣyanti tvāṃ mahābalam /
rākṣasyaste śubhaḥ panthā gaccha rāmāntikaṃ drutam //

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Seeing Hanuman as huge as a great mountain, Sita felt extremely reassured, glad and happy. She said to that best amongst the monkeys (65), 'Oh the great and powerful one! You are really very competent, potent and able. Alright, now you must immediately go to Sri Ram with great haste. Otherwise these demonesses who are all sleeping around here shall see you and create a ruckus, throwing the secret plan out of gear. Let your path be blessed and become auspicious' (66).

बुभुक्षितः कपिः प्राह दर्शनात्पारणं मम। भविष्यति फलैः सर्वैस्तव दृष्टौ स्थितैर्हि मे।। 67।।
तथेत्युक्तः स जानक्या भक्षयित्वा फलं कपिः। ततः प्रस्थापितोऽगच्छज्जानकीं प्रणिपत्य सः।
किञ्चिद्दूरमथो गत्वा स्वात्मन्येवान्वचिन्तयत्।।68।।

bubhukṣitaḥ kapiḥ prāha darśanātpāraṇaṃ mama /
bhaviṣyati phalaiḥ sarvaistava dṛṣṭau sthitairhi me //
tathetyaktaḥ sa jānakyā bhakṣayitvā phalaṃ kapiḥ /
tataḥ prasthāpito'gacchajjānakīṃ praṇipatya saḥ /
kiñciddūramatho gatvā svātmanyevānvacintayat //

Hanuman, the monkey ('Kapi'), was hungry. He said, 'I have already had your Darshan (divine view). Now I have to break my fast by eating the fruits which I see in the trees in front of you' (67).

Then, when the daughter of Janak (Sita) gave her consent to him, Hanuman ate those fruits, took leave by bowing before her and departed from there. Some distance away, he thought to himself (68)—

कार्यार्थमागतो दूतः स्वामिकार्याविरोधतः। अन्यत्किञ्चिदसम्पाद्य गच्छत्यधम एव सः।। 69।।
अतोऽहं किञ्चिदन्यच्च कृत्वा दृष्ट्वाथ रावणम्। सम्भाष्य च ततो रामदर्शनार्थं व्रजाम्यहम्।।70।।

kāryārthamāgato dūtaḥ svāmikāryāvirodhataḥ /
anyatkiñcidasampādya gacchatyadhama eva saḥ //
ato'haṃ kiñcidanyacca kṛtvā dṛṣṭvātha rāvaṇam /
sambhāṣya ca tato rāmadarśanārtha vrajāmyaham //

'A messenger—who comes to do his Lord's work, and having done it, returns without doing some extra work (i.e. some subsidiary, ancillary or peripheral work) related to the main job which does not come in the way of its successful completion—is considered as inept, inefficient and incompetent as well as lowly, foolish, dumb or ill-witted by nature (69). Hence, I must do something extra also. I must meet Ravana and talk with him (and try to find out some amicable way out

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of this log-jam and avoid bloodshed, if possible). After that I shall go to see (meet) Sri Ram' (70).

इति निश्चित्य मनसा वृक्षखण्डान्महाबलः। उत्पाट्याशोकवनिकां निर्वृक्षामकरोत्क्षणात्।। 71।।
सीताश्रयनगं त्यक्त्वा वनं शून्यं चकार सः। उत्पाटयन्तं विपिनं दृष्ट्वा राक्षसयोषितः।। 72।।
अपृच्छञ् जानकीं कोऽसौ वानराकृतिरुद्भटः।। 73।।

iti niścitya manasā vṛkṣakhaṇḍānmahābalaḥ /
utpāṭyāśokavanikāṃ nirvṛkṣāmakarotkṣaṇāt //
sītāśrayanagaṃ tyaktvā vanaṃ śūnyaṃ cakāra saḥ /
utpāṭayantaṃ vipinaṃ dṛṣṭvā rākṣasayoṣitaḥ //
apṛcchañ jānakīṃ ko'sau vānarākṛtirudbhaṭaḥ //

Having decided so, the most strong, brave and courageous, valiant and valorous one (Hanuman) uprooted all the trees of the Ashok grove in an instant (i.e. very quickly) and made it bare (71). Leaving untouched the tree under which Sita was sitting, he laid to waste the entire garden. Seeing him destroying the garden-forest, the demonesses (72) asked Sita, 'Who is this formidable warrior in the form of a monkey?' (73).

जानक्युवाच

भवत्य एव जानन्ति मायां राक्षसनिर्मिताम्। नाहमेनं विजानामि दुःखशोकसमाकुला।। 74।।
इत्युक्तास्त्वरितं गत्वा राक्षस्यो भयपीडिताः। हनूमता कृतं सर्वं रावणाय न्यवेदयन्।। 75।।

jānakyuvāca

bhavatya eva jānanti māyāṃ rākṣasanirmitām /
nāhamenaṃ vijānāmi duḥkhaśokasamākulā //
ityuktvāstvaritaṃ gatvā rākṣasyo bhayapīḍitāḥ /
hanūmatā kṛtaṃ sarvaṃ rāvaṇāya nyavedayan //

Sita replied, 'Only you can know more about this demonic, illusive, scary and deceitful trick (that the demons, specially Ravana has been playing on me to scare me into submission). What do I know about it because I am already suffering from extreme miseries, tormented with my own sorrows and anguished with surging grief, and am so confounded and overwhelmed with perplexity, vexations and consternations that its impossible for me to even bother about, to even ponder or apply my mind to know about it?' (74).

When she had said so, the terrified demonesses hurried to Ravana and told him all about the deeds of Hanuman (75).

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[Note :—Sita has deftly tried to conceal Hanuman's identity and the fact that they have already met and chalked out a plan for Sri Ram's invasion of Lanka and her own rescue. It should also be noted that, as far as Sita could tell, Hanuman had taken her leave and had gone back on his way to meet Sri Ram as is very clear from verse nos. 67-68. His return to destroy the Ashok grove was an after-thought, and Sita cannot be aware of it. Hanuman had not sought her permission to wreck havoc on Lanka. That was his own decision and agenda; Sita was not a party to it. Hence, she was not lying when she denied any knowledge of what was happening. She rightly thought that the demons have staged this drama to make her shiver in fear of the potential of a terrible calamity which was about to unfold in the immediate environs of her habitat which would further dent her resilience and determination to be resolute and firm in her vows. This might terrorise her sufficiently to succumb.]

देव कश्चिन्महासत्त्वो वानराकृतिदेहभृत्। सीतया सह सम्भाष्य ह्यशोकवनिकां क्षणात्।
उत्पाट्य चैत्यप्रासादं बभञ्जामितविक्रमः।। 76।।
प्रासादरक्षिणः सर्वान्हत्वा तत्रैव तस्थिवान्। तच्छ्रुत्वा तूर्णमुत्थाय वनभङ्गं महाप्रियम्।। 77।।
किङ्करान्प्रेषयामास नियुतं राक्षसाधिपः। निभग्नचैत्यप्रासादप्रथमान्तरसंस्थितः।। 78।।

deva kaścinmahāsattvo vānarākṛtidehabhṛt /
sītayā saha sambhāṣya hyaśokavanikāṃ kṣaṇāt /
utpāṭya caityaprāsādaṃ babhañjāmitavikramaḥ //
prāsādarakṣiṇaḥ sarvānhatvā tatraiva tasthivān /
tacchrutvā tūrṇamutthāya vanabhaṅgaṃ mahāpriyam //
kiṅkarānpreṣayāmāsa niyutaṃ rākṣasādhipaḥ /
nibhagnacaityaprāsādaprathamāntarasaṃsthitaḥ //

'Oh Lord! A very brave, majestic and powerful creature in the form of a monkey has talked with Sita[1] and has uprooted the Ashok grove almost in an instant. This great valorous and valiant one has also broken the building of the garden temple (76). He has killed all its sentries and guards, and presently he is sitting right there'.

As soon as he heard the most unpleasant news of the destruction of the forest which was very dear to him (77), the king of demons dispatched one lakh• (one hundred thousand) servants (i.e. soldiers). Here meanwhile, Hanuman was sitting in the forecourt of the broken temple, waiting for them (78).

[Note—[1]The very fact that the demonesses knew that someone had talked with Sita shows that there were spies amongst them who pretended to sleep but were vigilant and alert and keeping tabs on the goings on.

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'The word 'Niyut' fu;qr means either 1 lakh or 10 lakhs, meaning a hundred thousand and ten hundred thousand respectively. But 10 lakh soldiers sent to catch hold of a single intruder is too much of an exaggerated, hyperbolic figure. It seems absurd on the face of it. Hence, I have assumed that they were 1 lakh soldiers in number who were sent by Ravana to capture Hanuman.]

हनुमान्पर्वताकारो लोहस्तम्भकृतायुधः। किञ्चिल्लाङ्गूलचलनो रक्तास्यो भीषणाकृतिः।। 79।।

hanumānparvatākāro lohastambhakṛtāyudhaḥ /
kiñcillāṅgūlacalano raktāyo bhīṣaṇākṛtiḥ //

He had assumed a huge mountain like colossus form by that time. He used the broken iron pillar of the temple as his club/baton (and waited in ambush). His tail was slowly waving majestically, while his face was red-tinged with anger and his countenance was formidably terrifying (79).

आपतन्तं महासङ्घं राक्षसानां ददर्श सः। चकार सिंहनादं च श्रुत्वा ते मुमुहुर्भृशम्।। 80।।
हनूमन्तमथो दृष्ट्वा राक्षसा भीषणाकृतिम्। निर्जघ्नुर्विविधास्त्रौघैः सर्वराक्षसघातिनम्।।81।।
तत उत्थाय हनुमान्मुद्गरेण समन्ततः। निष्पिपेष क्षणादेव मशकानिव यूथपः।।82।।

āpatantaṃ mahāsaṅghaṃ rākṣasānāṃ dadarśa saḥ /
cakāra siṃhanādaṃ ca śrutvā te mumuhurbhṛśam //
hanūmantamatho dṛṣṭvā rākṣasā bhīṣaṇākṛtim /
nirjaghnurvividhāstraughaiḥ sarvarākṣasaghātinam //
tata utthāya hanumānmudgareṇa samantataḥ /
niṣpipeṣa kṣaṇādeva maśakāniva yūthapaḥ //

Seeing the huge army of demons arrive, Hanuman roared loudly and ferociously like a lion which made them all stunned and stupefied with fear (80).

Seeing Hanuman, who was the slayer of all demons and had an awe inspiring colossus body, the demons shot various types of weapons at him (81). Then, just as a king of elephants crushes or grinds mosquitoes to pulp, Hanuman pressed them (i.e. crushed them) to death by his baton, which in this case was the iron pillar of the temple (see verse no. 79) (82).

निहतान्किङ्कराञ् श्रुत्वा रावणः क्रोधमूर्च्छितः। पञ्च सेनापतींस्तत्र प्रेषयामास दुर्मदान्।। 83।।
हनूमानपि तान्सर्वांल्लोहस्तम्भेन चाहनत्। ततः क्रुद्धो मन्त्रिसुतान्प्रेषयामास सप्त सः।।84।।

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nihatānkiṅkarāñ śrutvā rāvaṇaḥ krodhamurcchitaḥ /
pañca senāpatīṃstatra preṣayāmāsa durmadān //
hanūmānapi tānsarvāṃllohastambhena cāhanat /
tataḥ kruddho mantrisutānpreṣayāmāsa sapta saḥ //

Hearing the death of his servants (soldiers), Ravana became mad with anger (literally, he fainted out of shock and anger). He sent five of his most talented and invincible commanders (83).

Hanuman killed all of them in a moment with his iron rod. After that, he (Ravana) sent seven of his minister's sons (84).

आगतानपि तान्सर्वान्पूर्ववद्वानरेश्वरः। क्षणान्निःशेषतो हत्वा लोहस्तम्भेन मारुतिः।। 85।।
पूर्वस्थानमुपाश्रित्य प्रतीक्षन् राक्षसान् स्थितः। ततो जगाम बलवान्कुमारोऽक्षः प्रतापवान्।।86।।

āgatānapi tānsarvānpūrvavadvānareśvaraḥ /
kṣaṇānniḥśeṣato hatvā lohastabhena mārutiḥ //
pūrvasthānamupāśritya pratīkṣan rākṣasān sthitaḥ /
tatojagāma balavānkumāro'kṣaḥ pratāpavān //

The king of monkeys, the son of the Wind God (Hanuman), killed all of them with the iron pillar in an instant (in a short time) when they arrived there (85).

Then he sat at his earlier perch waiting in ambush for others to come. Then the most strong, valorous and famed prince Akshay Kumar came to face him (86).

तमुत्पपात हनुमान् दृष्ट्वाकाशे समुद्गरः। गगनात्त्वरितो मूर्ध्नि मुद्गरेण व्यताडयत्।। 87।।
हत्वा तमक्षं निःशेषं बलं सर्वं चकार सः।।88।।

tamutpapāta hanumān dṛṣṭvākāśe samudgaraḥ /
gaganāttvarito mūrdhni mudgareṇa vyatāḍayat //
hatvā tamakṣaṃ niḥśeṣaṃ balaṃ sarvaṃ cakāra saḥ //

Seeing him, Hanuman took his baton and immediately flew high up in the sky. From there, he threw that iron pillar with a great force on his head (87).

In this way he killed Akshay Kumar and also removed all traces of his forces (army) (88).

ततः श्रुत्वा कुमारस्य वधं राक्षसपुङ्गवः। क्रोधेन महताविष्ट इन्द्रजेतारमब्रवीत्।। 89।।
पुत्र गच्छाम्यहं तत्र यत्रास्ते पुत्रहा रिपुः। हत्वा तमथवा बद्ध्वा आनयिष्यामि तेऽन्तिकम्।।90।।

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tataḥ śrutvā kumārasya vadhaṃ rākṣasapuṅgavaḥ /
krodhena mahatāviṣṭa indrajetāramabravīt //
putra gacchāmyahaṃ tatra yatrāste putrahā ripuḥ /
hatvā tamathavā baddhvā ānayiṣyāmi te'ntikam //

Hearing about the death of the prince (Akshay Kumar), the Lord of the demons (Ravana) became extremely angry and exasperated. He said to Indrajeet (Meghnad) (89), 'Oh son! I am going to where my enemy is who has killed my son, and I shall either kill him or tie him and bring him to you' (90).

इन्द्रजित्पितरं प्राह त्यज शोकं महामते। मयि स्थिते किमर्थं त्वं भाषसे दुःखितं वचः।।91।।
बद्ध्वानेष्ये दुतं तात वानरं ब्रह्मपाशतः। इत्युक्त्वा रथमारुह्य राक्षसैर्बहुभिर्वृतः।।92।।

indrajitpitaraṃ prāha tyaja śokaṃ mahāmate /
mayi sthite kimarthaṃ tvaṃ bhāṣase duḥkhitaṃ vacaḥ //
baddhvāneyeṣye drutaṃ tāta vānaraṃ brahmapāśataḥ /
ityuktvā rathamāruhya rākṣasairbahubhirvṛtaḥ //

Indrajeet (Meghnad) said to his father, 'Oh the wise and intelligent one! Leave (stop) lamenting or feeling remorseful. Why do you say such sorrowful and anguished words of dejection and dismay when I am here? (91). I shall soon bring that monkey tied in the 'Brahmapash' (which was a especially strong tying rope endowed with divine and magical powers, was activated by invoking Mantras and was gifted by Lord Brahma to him; it could tie the enemy, no matter how powerful and invincible he might be, without actually killing him. It was infallible and invincible)'.

Saying this, he boarded a chariot, and accompanied (surrounded) by numerous demons, he went to Hanuman (92).

जगाम वायुपुत्रस्य समीपं वीरविक्रमः। ततोऽतिगर्जितं श्रुत्वा स्तम्भमुद्यम्य वीर्यवान्।।93।।
उत्पपात नभोदेशं गरुत्मानिव मारुतिः। ततो भ्रमन्तं नभसि हनूमन्तं शिलीमुखैः।।94।।
विद्ध्वा तस्य शिरोभागमिषुभिश्चाष्टभिः पुनः। हृदयं पादयुगलं षड्भिरेकेन वालधिम्।।95।।
भेदयित्वा ततो घोरं सिंहनादमथाकरोत्। ततोऽतिहर्षाद्धनुमान् स्तम्भमुद्यम्य वीर्यवान्।।96।।

jagāma vāyuputrasya samīpaṃ vīravikramaḥ /
tato'tigarjitaṃ śrutvā stambhamudyamya vīryavān //
utpapāta nabhodeśaṃ garutmāniva mārutiḥ /
tato bhramantaṃ nabhasi hanūmantaṃ śilīmukhaiḥ //

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viddhvā tasya śirobhāgamiṣubhiścāṣṭabhiḥ punaḥ /
hṛdayaṃ pādayugalaṃ ṣaḍbhirekena vāladhim //
bhedayitvā tato ghoraṃ siṃhanādamathākarot /
tato'tiharṣāddhanumāna stambhamudyamya vīryavān //

That most valorous and valiant one (Meghnad) went near the son of the Wind God (Hanuman). Then the brave and courageous one (Hanuman)—who had the iron pillar in his hands—heard him (Meghnad) roar very loudly (93). The son of the Wind God flew in the sky like the bird Garud (the eagle or heron who is the vehicle of Lord Vishnu; here meaning swiftly and with great speed). Seeing Hanuman moving in the sky, he (Meghnad) (94) shot eight arrows to strike at the former's head. Then he aimed six more arrows at him—one at his heart, two at both his feet, and one at his tail (95). Then he roared thunderously like a lion. The most manly and valorous Hanuman lifted his iron pillar most delightfully (to strike once again) (96).

जघान सारथिं साश्वं रथं चाचूर्णयत्क्षणात्। ततोऽन्यं रथमादाय मेघनादो महाबलः।।97।।
शीघ्रं ब्रह्मास्त्रमादाय बद्ध्वा वानरपुङ्गवम्। निनाय निकटं राज्ञो रावणस्य महाबलः।।98।।

jaghāna sārathiṃ sāśvaṃ rathaṃ cācūrṇayatkṣaṇāt /
tato'nyaṃ rathamādāya meghanādo mahābalaḥ //
śīghraṃ brahmāstramādāya baddhvā vānarapuṅgavam /
nināya nikaṭaṃ rājño rāvaṇasya mahābalaḥ //

He killed Indrajeet's charioteer and pounded his chariot, along with its horses, to a powder in an instant. Then the most strong Meghnad (Indrajeet) mounted a second chariot (97) and soon tied the most exalted of the monkeys (Hanuman) in the snare of the Brahmapash (see verse no. 92) and took him to the king (Ravana) (98).

यस्य नाम सततं जपन्ति येऽज्ञानकर्मकृतबन्धनं क्षणात्।
सद्य एव परिमुच्य तत्पदं यान्ति कोटिरविभासुरं शिवम्।।99।।

yasya nāma satataṃ japanti ye'jñānakarmakṛtabaṃdhanaṃ kṣaṇāt /
sadya eva parimucya tatpadaṃ yānti koṭiravibhāsuraṃ śivam //

By constantly repeating his (Sri Ram's) divine, powerful and potent name, the devotee is able to cut through, dismantle and get rid of the snare or shackles created by ignorance and delusions in an instant. As a result, he is able to attain the most exalted and auspicious stature of emancipation and salvation which is most pure, glorious, truthful, splendorous and radiant as crores (millions) of suns (99).

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तस्यैव रामस्य पदाम्बुजं सदा हृत्पद्ममध्ये सुनिधाय मारुतिः।
सदैव निर्मुक्तसमस्तबन्धनः किं तस्य पाशैरितैश्च बन्धनैः।।100।।

tasyaiva rāmasya padāmbujaṃ sadā hṛtpadyamadhe sunidhāya mārutiḥ /
sadaiva nirmuktasamastabandhanaḥ kiṃ tasya pāśairitaiśca bandhanaiḥ //

The holy and divine lotus-like feet of that Lord, Sri Ram, is always enshrined/enthroned by the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) in the centre (core) of his lotus-like heart and constantly remembered by him. By doing so, he is eternally free from all the shackles/fetters/snares/knots/ties etc. pertaining to this mundane, deluding, artificial and entrapping world that pillory a creature and keeps it ensnared and entangled. Then, say, what can ever happen to him by this Brahmapash or any other form of snare used by the demons (i.e. how can anyone ever tie him up in the battle field) (100).

***

Sundar Kand — Canto 4

Dialogue between Hanuman and Ravana; The burning of Lanka

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

यान्तं कपीन्द्रं धृतपाशबन्धनं विलोकयन्तं नगरं विभीतवत्।
अताडयन्मुष्टितलैः सुकोपनाः पौराः समन्तादनुयान्त ईक्षितुम्।।1।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

yāntaṃ kapīndaṃ dhṛtapāśabandhanaṃ
vilokayantaṃ nagaraṃ vibhītavat /
atāḍayanmuṣṭitalaiḥ sukopanāḥ
paurāḥ samantādanuyānta īkṣitum //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! When the lord of monkeys ('Kapindra'; Hanuman) was passing through the city pretending to be terrified of the demons and scared for his life after being captured and tied by the Brahmapash, he looked around the city and watched its inhabitants in amusement. The citizens assembled from all the nook and corners to have a glimpse of him, and followed him mockingly. They angrily and scornfully punched him with their clenched fists as he was being taken to the court of Ravana (1).

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ब्रह्मास्त्रमेनं क्षणमात्रसङ्गमं कृत्वा गतं ब्रह्मवरेण सत्वरम्।
ज्ञात्वा हनूमानपि फल्गुरज्जुभिर्धृतो ययौ कार्यविशेषगौरवात्।।2।।

brahmāstramenaṃ kṣaṇamātrasaṅgamaṃ
kṛtvā gataṃ brahmavareṇa satvaram /
jñātvā hanūmānapi phalgurajjubhi-
rdhṛto yayau kāryaviśeṣagauravāt //

The 'Brahmastra'[1] (the special weapon of Brahma given to Meghnad by him; both Brahmastra and Brahmapash are specially empowered Brahma's weapons) touched the body of Hanuman for only a fraction of a moment and went back to him (Brahma) because of the boons he had given to Hanuman. (Brahma had given a boon to Hanuman that his weapon will not have any effect on him.) Inspite of being aware of it (that the weapon has not harmed him), Hanuman remained tied by humble ropes (that Meghnad had used to tie him with after subduing him with the Brahmastra) for the greater cause and the special work that he had determined (decided) to do majestically for Sri Ram with gusto and dare devilry (2).

[Note :—[1]Brahmastra and Brahmapash are the names of two great invincible weapons that the creator Brahma had given to Meghnad on an earlier occasion. The word 'Brahmastra' means a weapon belonging to Brahma, while 'Brahmapash' refers to the snare or the magical rope that is especially empowered by invoking certain Mantras and can tie down an opponent, after he is subdued by the use of the Brahmastra, in such a way that he cannot escape from its knots.

Hanuman could have very easily shredded the ropes to smithereens, but he pretended to be humbled and frightened out of his wits for there were larger things at stake and he would have ample opportunity a little later to show-case his great dexterity and stupendous muscle powers. See also verse no. 14 below. After all he wished to do 'something spectacular' before returning back to Sri Ram. It was important for him to face Ravana, and had he broken free from the snare he would not have had the chance to humiliate the demon king and revenge Sita's insult at his hands by burning his golden city of which he was so proud.]

सभान्तरस्थस्य च रावणस्य तं पुरो निधायाह बलारिजित्तदा।
बद्धो मया ब्रह्मवरेण वानरः समागतोऽनेन हता महासुराः।।3।।

sabhāntarasthasya ca rāvaṇasya taṃ
puro nidhāyāha balārijittadā /
baddhoḥ mayā brahmavareṇa vānaraḥ
samāgato'nena hatā mahāsurāḥ //

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Then Indrajeet (literally one who has forcibly conquered Indra; here referring to Meghnad) took him to the court of Ravana and said triumphantly, 'I have bought this monkey tied up by the powers of the boon given to me by Brahma (i.e. by using the power of Mantras which Brahma had empowered him to use against his enemies to capture them). This is the fellow who has killed many of our brave warriors (3).

यद्युक्तमत्रार्य विचार्य मन्त्रिभिर्विधीयतामेष न लौकिको हरिः।
ततो विलोक्याह स राक्षसेश्वरः प्रहस्तमग्रे स्थितमञ्जनाद्रिभम्।।4।।

yadyuktamatrārya vicārya mantribhirvidhīyatāmeṣa na laukiko hariḥ/
tato vilokyāha sa rākṣaseśvaraḥ prahastamagre sthitamañjanādribham//

Consult with the ministers and decide what to do with him (or what punishment should be given to him, or what course of action is to be adopted). He is no ordinary monkey'.

Then the king of demons (Ravana) looked at Prahasta (one of the chief demons) who was dark complexioned like the Kajjal mountain (i.e. the black mountain of dark rock made of solidified soot) and was sitting in his front. He ordered Prahasta (4)—

प्रहस्त पृच्छैनमसौ किमागतः किमत्र कार्यं कुत एव वानरः।
वनं किमर्थं सकलं विनाशितं हताः किमर्थं मम राक्षसा बलात्।।5।।

prahasta pṛcchainamasau kimāgataḥ
kimatra kāryaṃ kuta eva vānaraḥ/
vanaṃ kimarthaṃ sakalaṃ vināśitaṃ
hatāḥ kimarthaṃ mama rākṣasā balāt//

'Oh Prahasta! Ask this monkey why has he come here? What work or purpose does he have here? Where has he come from? Why has he ruined my whole garden (or my royal forest)? And why has he killed all my demon warriors ruthlessly?' (5).

ततः प्रहस्तो हनुमन्तमादरात् पप्रच्छ केन प्रहितोऽसि वानर।
भयं च ते मास्तु विमोक्ष्यसे मया सत्यं वदस्वाखिलराजसन्निधौ।।6।।

tataḥ prahasto hanumantamādarāt
papraccha kena prahito'si vānara/
bhayaṃ ca te māstu vimokṣyase mayā
satyaṃ vadasvākhilarājasannidhau//

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Then Prahasta asked Hanuman most respectfully, 'Oh monkey! Who has sent you? Don't be afraid—tell everything truthfully before the emperor (i.e. Ravana). Then I shall set you free' (6).

[Note—Prahasta talked with Hanuman with 'respect' and not with disdain and contempt because he knew how to treat a messenger of a rival king with dignity. Prahasta was an old demon, and he was wise and privy to the real identity of Hamuman.]

ततोऽतिहर्षात्पवनात्मजो रिपुं निरीक्ष्य लोकत्रयकण्टकासुरम्।
वक्तुं प्रचक्रे रघुनाथसत्कथां क्रमेण रामं मनसा स्मरन्मुहुः।।7।।

tato'tiharṣātpavanātmajo ripuṃ
nirīkṣya lokatrayakaṇṭakāsuram /
vaktuṃ pracakre raghunāthasatkathāṃ
krameṇa rāmaṃ manasā smaranmuhuḥ //

Then seeing his arch enemy, the demon (Ravana)—who was like a thorn for the 3 worlds—the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) invoked and remembered Sri Ram in his heart. He felt extremely exhilarated and delighted, and started to narrate the story of Raghunath (Sri Ram) in a chronological order (7)—

श्रृणु स्फुटं देवगणाद्यमित्र हे रामस्य दूतोऽहमशेषह्रत्स्थितेः।
यस्याखिलेशस्य ह्रताधुना त्वया भार्या स्वनाशाय शुनेव सद्धविः।।8।।

śṛṇu sphuṭaṃ devagaṇādyamitra he
rāmasya dūto'hamaśeṣahṛtsthiteḥ /
yasyākhileśasya hṛtādhunā tvayā
bhāryā svanāśāya śuneva saddhaviḥ //

Hanuman said, 'Oh the enemy of Gods, listen clearly (attentively). Just as a dog steals the offerings of a fire sacrifice, you have stolen (abducted stealthily) the chaste, loyal and honourable wife of the Lord of the entire universe, Sri Ram, who resides in the heart of all (as he is the all-pervading, omnipresent and all encompassing supreme and transcendental Brahm who lives in the heart of all creatures as their Atma or soul). I am his messenger, and I warn you that you have taken this evil step for your own undoing and ruin (8).

स राघवोऽभ्येत्य मतङ्गपर्वतं सुग्रीवमैत्रीमनलस्य सन्निधौ।
कृत्वैकबाणेन निहत्य वालिनं सुग्रीवमेवाधिपतिं चकार तम्।।9।।

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sa rāghavo'bhyetya mataṅgparvataṃ sugrīvamaitrīmanalasya sannidhau /
kṛtvaikabāṇena nihatya vālinaṃ sugrīvamevādhipatiṃ cakāra tam //

That Raghav (i.e. Sri Ram, whom I have referred to just now) came to the Matang mountain (i.e. Kishkindha) and made friends with Sugriv with the sacred fire as a witness. He killed Vaali with a single arrow and made Sugriv the king of monkeys (9).

स वानराणामधिपो महाबली महाबलैर्वानरयूथकोटिभिः।
रामेण सार्धं सह लक्ष्मणेन भोः प्रवर्षणेऽमर्षयुतोऽवतिष्ठते।। 10।।

sa vānarāṇāmadhipo mahābalī mahābalairvānarayūthakoṭibhiḥ /
rāmeṇa sārdhaṃ saha lakṣmaṇena bhoḥ pravarṣaṇe'marṣayuto'vatiṣṭhate //

Presently, that most valorous and valiant king of monkeys (Sugriv), along with millions of other monkey commanders who are as manly, courageous, strong, bold and brave as him, and accompanied by Sri Ram and Laxman, are residing on the Prabarshan mountain. They are very angry (at you) (10).

[Note :—Sugriv had come to Prabarshan mountain along with his army commanders when Laxman had gone to fetch him from Kishkindha. Presently he was camping with Sri Ram and Laxman at Prabarshan with his commanders. That is why Hanuman said that they are residing on this mountain instead of Kishkindha.]

सञ्चोदितास्तेन महाहरीश्वरा धरासुतां मार्गयितुं दिशो दश।
तत्राहमेकः पवनात्मजः कपिः सीतां विचिन्वञ्छनकैः समागतः।। 11।।

sañcoditāstena mahāharīśvarā
dharāsutāṃ mārgayituṃ diśo daśa /
tatrāhamekaṃ pavanātmajaḥ kapiḥ
sītāṃ vicinvañchanakaiḥ samāgataḥ //

He (Sugriv or Sri Ram) has sent very senior and famed lords of monkeys (i.e. their chieftains and army commanders) in the ten directions in search of the daughter of the earth (Sita). Out of those monkeys, I am one, the son of the Wind God. While gradually searching for her, I have happened to come here (11).

[Note—The 10 directions referred to by Hanuman are—North (Uttar), North-East (Ishan), East (Purva), South-East (Agneya), South (Dakshin), South-West (Nairitya), West (Paschim), North-West (Vayabya), Zenith (Akash), and Nadir (Patal).]

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दृष्ट्वा मया पद्मपलाशलोचना सीता कपित्वाद्विपिनं विनाशितम्।
दृष्ट्वा ततोऽहं रभसा समागतान्मां हन्तुकामान् धृतचापसायकान्।।12।।
मया हतास्ते परिरक्षितं वपुः प्रियो हि देहोऽखिलदेहिनां प्रभो।
ब्रह्मास्त्रपाशेन निबध्य मां ततः समागमन्मेघनिनादनामकः।।13।।

dṛṣṭvā mayā padmapalāśalocanā
sītā kapitvādvipinaṃ vināśitam /
dṛṣṭvā tato'haṃ rabhasā samāgatā-
nmāṃ hantukāmān dhṛtacāpasāyakān //
mayā hatāste parirakṣitaṃ vapuḥ
priyo hi deho'khiladehināṃ prabho /
brahmāstrapāśena nibadhya māṃ tataḥ
samāgamanmeghaninādanāmakaḥ //

I have already seen the lotus-eyed Sita. Then I have destroyed the forest due to my inherent nature as a monkey (who is mischievous and naughty, and creates havoc when let lose in a garden of fruits). When I saw that the demons are coming towards me armed with bows and arrows eager to kill me (12), then I killed them to protect myself, because oh Lord, the body is dear to all the creatures. After that, this demon named Meghnad has tied me with the snare using the weapon given to him by Brahma, and has brought me here in captivity (13).

स्पृष्ट्वैव मां ब्रह्मवरप्रभावतस्त्यक्त्वा गतं सर्वमवैमि रावण।
तथाप्यहं बद्ध इवागतो हितं प्रवक्तुकामः करुणारसार्द्रधीः।।14।।

spṛṣṭvaiva māṃ brahmavaraprabhāvata-
styaktvā gataṃ sarvamavaimi rāvaṇa /
tathāpyahaṃ baddha ivāgato hitaṃ
pravaktukāmaḥ karuṇārasārdradhīḥ //

Oh Ravana! Though I knew fully well that this Brahma's weapon had gone back as soon as it had touched me (refer verse no. 2 above), I still came here tied in shackles just to tell you something concerning your own welfare and well being out of my compassion and mercy for you. [I also wished to avoid unnecessary bloodshed if possible.] (14).

विचार्य लोकस्य विवेकतो गतिं न राक्षसीं बुद्धिमुपैहि रावण।
दैवीं गतिं संसृतिमोक्षहैतुकीं समाश्रयात्यन्तहिताय देहिनः।।15।।

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vicārya lokasya vivekato gatiṃ
na rākṣasīṃ buddhimupaihi rāvaṇa /
daivīṃ gatiṃ saṃsṛtimokṣahaitukīṃ
samāśrayātyantahitāya dehinaḥ //

Oh Ravana! You must seriously think (contemplate, ponder, discuss) wisely about the fate and destiny of this world and existence. Do not embrace or follow evil and demonic tendencies and pervert inclinations of your mind. Instead you must take shelter of and follow the divine fellowship of spiritualism which is a great well-wisher of all the creatures and is the provider of emancipation and salvation to them. It liberates one from the cycle of birth and death, and grants liberation and deliverance from the snare that pillory a creature interminably in its shackles (15).

त्वं ब्रह्मणो ह्युत्तमवंशसम्भवः पौलस्त्यपुत्रोऽसि कुबेरबान्धवः।
देहात्मबुद्ध्यापि च पश्य राक्षसो नास्यात्मबुद्ध्या किमु राक्षसो नहि।।16।।

tvaṃ brahmaṇo hyuttamavaṃśasambhavaḥ
paulastyaputro'si kuberabāndhavaḥ /
dehātmabuddhyāpi ca paśya rākṣaso
nāsyātmabuddhyā kimu rākṣaso nahi //

You have taken birth in the most exalted clan of Lord Brahma, i.e. you are a 'Brahmin' by birth. You are a son of Visrawa who is the son of Pulastya (i.e. you are the grandson of sage Pulastya), and are a brother of Kuber (the treasurer of Gods). Hence you are not a 'demon', as the word implies, even by the virtue of your birth, genealogy and relationships (i.e. by your body, pedigree and birth, your soul and mind-intellect complex have a noble origin and you are not an ordinary demon who is evil, sinful and vile by nature and temperament. Both your gross and subtle bodies are not basically demonic and evil). Surely, therefore, you are not a demon by your inner-self which is your Atma or soul (which nevertheless is always pure, uncorrupt, immaculate and divine. This Atma is your pure and truthful 'self' which is a fraction of the all-pervading, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent macrocosmic supreme Soul of the creation, the soul which is eternal, infanite and non perishable) (16).

[Note :—(1) For Ravana's family tree, see chart at the end of Uttar Kand, Canto 1.

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(2) Basically what Hanuman says is the fundamental principle of Vedanta—that the creature's truthful identity is the Atma which is most pure and eternal. The gross body of a creature, consisting of the sense organs of perception and actions, as well as his subtle body consisting of the mind and intellect complex, are the products of a combination of factors pertaining to his past deeds, their consequences, his unfilled desires, his mental inclinations, and his level of wisdom and enlightenment that makes him detached and dispassionate to varying degrees towards this artificial and entrapping world; this erudition level teaches him that all the things in which he had been so engrossed until now are perishable and transient, and until and unless he becomes detached from them, he would continue to rotate in this endless cycle of transmigration, without any end in sight. Since Ravana had a high birth in a family of exalted sages, he had the correct gene pool, but under ignorance and misguided by none other than his own mother he did things that made him a 'demon'. So Hanuman was trying to awaken him about his true identity and his real self.]

शरीरबुद्धीन्द्रियदुःखसन्ततिर्न ते न च त्वं तव निर्विकारतः।
अज्ञानहेतोश्च तथैव सन्ततेरसत्त्वमस्याः स्वपतो हि दृश्यवत्॥17॥

śarīrabuddhīndriyaduḥkhasantatirna
te na ca tvaṃ tava nirvikārataḥ /
ajñānahetośca tathaiva santate-
rasattvamasyāḥ svapato hi dṛśyavat //

I shall tell you the true nature of your 'pure self' which you have forgotten about. You are, in your essential form, absolutely faultless and without any blemishes, are eternally imperishable, immutable, unaltered and uniform.

The gross body, the intellect, the different sense organs and their accompanying sorrows and miseries—none of them belong to you (or in other words, none of them is your true identity, they do not define or characterize you, they are not your basic quality, virtue or attribute); and neither you are any one of them (i.e. you cannot identify your 'pure self', which is your Atma or soul, with any of those entities which are extraneous factors vis-ë-vis your Atma).

In fact, the main cause of even paying any attention to them is due to the existence of 'ignorance' about the reality, and they are as illusionary, misleading, imaginary and false as the visions seen in a dream (17).

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[Note—That is, to identify one's true self with the body and its organs and mind-intellect complex is a fallacious proposition. It has its genesis in ignorance about the reality because the Atma is the pure and truthful 'self', while the rest are only obtained by the Atma to complete its journey in this world due to its past deeds that it had done which is also due to its ignorance and lack of awareness about its own 'truth'. The Atma is 'Nirvikar', i.e. it is faultless and eternally unchangeable, while the rest of the entities mentioned above are all perishable and changeable and are full of faults and imperfectness. Say then, how can these—body, its organs and mind—be a creature's real self?]

इदं तु सत्यं तव नास्ति विक्रिया विकारहेतुर्न च तेऽद्वयत्वतः।
यथा नभः सर्वगतं न लिप्यते तथा भवान्देहगतोऽपि सूक्ष्मकः।
देहेन्द्रियप्राणशरीरसङ्गतस्त्वात्मेति बुद्ध्वाखिलबन्धभाग्भवेत्।।18।।

idaṃ tu satyaṃ tava nāsti vikriyā
vikāraheturna ca te'dvayatvataḥ /
yathā nabhaḥ sarvagataṃ na lipyate
tathā bhavāndehagato'pi sūkṣmakaḥ /
dehendriyaprāṇaśarīrasaṅgata-
stvātmeti baddhvākhilabandhabhāgbhavet //

This is an irrefutable and unequivocal truth and an eternal fact that there is no fault, blemish, shortcomings or deficiencies of any kind in your 'pure self', which is pure consciousness and called your Atma or soul. It is a unique and immaculate entity having matchless and unprecedented glorious and majestic virtues which are ethereal, sublime and divine, and therefore there is no scope of it being tarnished or spotted by any fault, shortcomings or blemishes.

Like the sky (or space) is neither tainted by anything present in it nor involved in or attached to it though it is subtly present everywhere, both inside as well as outside of all things, being all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent—you too, being microscopic and subtle in nature, do not get attached or affected by any of faults associated with the body inspite of living inside it as its Atma.

'The Atma (the pure self or pure consciousness) has a close relationship with the body, its sense organs and mind-intellect, and is not separate, distinct and independent from them'—this thinking process is the root cause of all attachments, ties, shackles and entrapments for the creature (18).

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[Note :—There are three types of bodies of a creature in Vedantic philosophy viz.—the gross body consisting the external, physical body consisting of the sense organs of perception and action, the subtle body consisting of the mind-intellect faculty, and the causal body encasing the pure, blissful, pure conscious Atma which is the true identity of a creature or a living organism. A separate appendix no.2 explains these concepts in detail. See also (i) Lanka Kand, Canto 1, verse no. 53; (ii) Lanka Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 38-39; (iii) Lanka Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 38-39 and (iv) Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 28-34.]

चिन्मात्रमेवाहमजोऽहमक्षरो ह्यानन्दभावोऽहमिति प्रमुच्यते।
देहोऽप्यनात्मा पृथिवीविकारजो न प्राण आत्मानिल एष एव सः।। 19।।

cinmātramevāhamajo'hamakṣaro
hyānandabhāvo'hamiti pramucyate /
deho'pyanātmā pṛthivīvikārajo
na prāṇa ātmānila eṣa eva saḥ //

The wise thought and enlightened awareness that 'I am an embodiment of pure consciousness, intelligent and wise, all-enlightened and pure knowledge, I am without a birth or beginning because I am eternal, infinite and imperishable, and I am an image of pure bliss, peace and tranquility'—this makes a creature liberated and emancipated.

Since the gross body (i.e. the physical body) has the faults and shortcomings associated with the 'earth element' (because the body is made up of the earth as a dominant element in its constitution, and earth is the grossest of the five primary elements that make up this universe by the virtue of their bonding with each other in varying ratios).

Similarly, the Pran (the vital life-sustaining wind forces present inside the body of a creature, especially its breath) too is not the Atma (or pure consciousness) because it is but another form of the 'wind element', though it is subtler than the earth. (19).

[Note—The 'elements' are like ingredients in a complex medicine or an organic compound. The final product has great potentials as curative medicine or innumerable varieties of chemicals and the uses to which they are put, but individual ingredients taken independently have no value when seen in the context of the utility of the finished product, though some might be of greater importance than the others. So is the case with

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the five basic elements of the creation which are sky, wind, fire, water and earth in increasing order of grossness and decreasing order of subtlety. Each one of them has its own particular value and importance, their own set of virtues and outstanding characteristics, but they are no match for the Atma. For example, the Atma is eternal for one, and none of these elements have this property.]

मनोऽप्यहङ्कारविकार एव नो न चापि बुद्धिः प्रकृतेर्विकारजा।
आत्मा चिदानन्दमयोऽविकारवान्देहादिसङ्घाद्व्यतिरिक्त ईश्वरः।।20।।

mano'pyahaṅkāravikāra eva no na cāpi buddhiḥ prakṛtervikārajā/
ātmā cidānandamayo'vikāravāndehādisaṅghādvayatirikta īśvaraḥ//

The subtle body of a creature consisting of its Mana and Buddhi are also not its Atma. The 'Mana', which is the mind and heart combine controlling the thoughts and emotions of the creature, is the breeding ground for 'Ahankar', which is the sense of pride and ego leading to arrogance and haughtiness that are associated with a creature.

The 'Prakriti' is the natural temperaments, the inherent tendencies and inclinations of the creature. These together exert their corrupting influence on the intellect and wisdom of a creature called its 'Buddhi'.

The Atma which is pure consciousness, the incorruptible and eternally enlightened soul, is an embodiment of supreme and eternal bliss, peace and tranquility, is faultless, without blemishes and shortcomings of any kinds, and is separate, distinct and independent from the body and other entities associated with it. The Atma is not related with them and neither is it affected with any faults associated with them.

On the contrary, the Atma is the master or the Lord of all of them. [In other words, the Atma is the Lord of the creature who is conventionally identified by his body at the micro level, and is equivalent to the supreme God or the Lord who is the master of the universe at the macro level. The Atma has got nothing to do with its gross or subtle bodies even as the supreme Lord remains independent of the creation that he has created himself!] (20).

निरञ्जनो मुक्त उपाधितः सदा ज्ञात्वैवमात्मानमितो विमुच्यते।
अतोऽहमात्यन्तिकमोक्षसाधनं वक्ष्ये शृणुष्वावहितो महामते।।21।।

nirañjano mukta upādhitaḥ sadā jñātvaivamātmānamito vimucyate/
ato'hamātyantikamokṣasādhanaṃ vakṣye śṛṇusvāvahito mahāmate//

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The Atma is 'Niranjan', i.e. it is always pure, holy, divine, immaculate and without faults and shortcomings, and it is invisible and beyond the grasp of perceptions and logic. It has no 'Upaadhi', i.e. it has no titles, attributes or honours that can define it.

As soon as a person (or any creature for that matter) realises the Atma's true form and becomes enlightened, aware of and wisened about it, he is deemed to be freed and delivered from the shackles of this deluding, ensnaring and mundane world.

Hence, oh the great and wise one, I am telling you the ultimate medium or path that helps to achieve emancipation and salvation. Listen to it carefully (21).

विष्णोर्हि भक्तिः सुविशोधनं धियस्ततो भवेज्ज्ञानमतीव निर्मलम्।
विशुद्धतत्त्वानुभवो भवेत्ततः सम्यग्विदित्वा परमं पदं व्रजेत्।।22।।

viṣṇorhi bhaktiḥ suviśodhana dhiya-
stato bhavejjñānamatīva nirmalam /
viśuddhatattvānubhavo bhavettataḥ
samyagviditvā paramaṃ padaṃ vrajet //

The 'Bhakti' of Lord Vishnu (i.e. having sincere dedication, devotion, faith and conviction in Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord of creation called also the Viraat Purush), is a great purifier of the 'Buddhi' (the mind-intellect complex and its various faculties, such as intelligence, wisdom, erudition, thoughts, discrimination, reasoning, concentration and focus, memory and sub-conscious etc.). This in turn helps to sprout most pure and truthful realisation and wisdom, free from all corruptions and misconceptions, about the entity that is absolutely immaculate, pristine pure, most truthful, and the real 'self' or consciousness. This supreme entity is called the Atma.

By enlightenment, self awareness and wisdom one becomes aware of or experiences the essential truth about the Atma (which is the pure self, pure consciousness and the elementary truth). This enlightenment or self realisation helps the person to attain the highest exalted stature of being one with the supreme Lord who is the Parmatma or the 'supreme transcendental Soul of the creation (22).

[Note :—Please also refer to Lanka Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 38-39.]

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अतो भजस्वाद्य हरिं रमापतिं रामं पुराणं प्रकृतेः परं विभुम्।
विसृज्य मौख्र्यं हृदि शत्रुभावनां भजस्व रामं शरणागतप्रियम्।
सीतां पुरस्कृत्य सपुत्रबान्धवो रामं नमस्कृत्य विमुच्यसे भयात्।। 23।।

ato bhajasvādya hariṃ ramāpatiṃ
rāmaṃ purāṇaṃ prakṛte paraṃ vibhum /
visṛjya maurkhyaṃ hṛdi śatrubhāvanāṃ
bhajasva rāmaṃ śaraṇāgatapriyam /
sītāṃ puraskṛtya saputrabāndhavo
rāmaṃ namaskṛtya vimucyase bhayāt //

Therefore, you must sincerely worship, adore, revere and have devotion for and firm faith and conviction in Sri Ram who is known as Hari (another name for Lord Vishnu; literally it also means 'wind' or life sustaining force; or it also means 'green' which is synonymous with life), the husband of Rama or Laxmi; who is the one mentioned by the Purans and honoured, praised and lauded by them; who is beyond Nature; and who is the all powerful, majestic, omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous and eternal supreme Lord called 'Vibhu'.

You must forsake and banish from your heart the enmity, hostility, ill will and hate that you have harboured for Sri Ram due to your ignorance and foolishness, and instead worship, adore, have devotion and dedication for Sri Ram who is very compassionate, merciful, benevolent and endearing towards his refugees or those who seek his shelter.

Keeping Sita in the vanguard, and accompanied by your sons and kith and kin, you should seek and take shelter in the holy feet of Sri Ram (i.e. surrender yourself before the Lord) and bow before him to pay your obeisance and homage. By doing so, you shall be free from all fears (23).

रामं परात्मानमभावयञ्जनो भक्त्या हृदिस्थं सुखरूपमद्वयम्।
कथं परं तीरमवाप्नुयाज्जनो भवाम्बुधेर्दुःखतरङ्गमालिनः।। 24।।

rāmaṃ parātmānamabhāvayañjano
bhaktyā hṛdisthaṃ sukharūpamadvayam /
kathaṃ paraṃ tīramavāpnuyājjano
bhavāmbudherduḥkhataraṅgamālinaḥ //

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Lord Ram is the unique, supreme and transcendental Soul called Parmatma residing in the heart of all the creatures as their Atma, which is an image of eternal bliss, peace and tranquility. Those who do not meditate and contemplate, with due devotion, faith, belief and conviction, upon Sri Ram in this form in their heart—how can they ever hope to cross and find the other end of the great ocean-like world with its swift currents and high waves representing the different sorrows, miseries, agonies, torments and tribulations associated with this world? (24).

नो चेत्त्वमज्ञानमयेन वह्निना ज्वलन्तमात्मानमरक्षितारिवत्।
नयस्यधोऽधः स्वकृतैश्च पातकैर्विमोक्षशङ्का न च ते भविष्यति।।25।।

no cettvamajñānamayena vahninā
jvalantamātmānamarakṣitārivat /
nayasyadho'dhaḥ svakṛtaiśca pātakai-
rvimokṣaśaṅkā na ca te bhaviṣyati //

If you do not worship and adore Sri Ram, if you do not have faith, devotion and dedication for him, then you shall keep on burning in (i.e. tormented, afflicted, scorched and agonized by) the fire ignited by foolishness and ignorance, and you cannot keep yourself safe (protected, unharmed) as an enemy of Sri Ram. Instead, you would progressively and gradually push yourself down in the dark chasm due to the various sins, misdeeds and misdemeanors committed by you. As a result, there will be no scope, no hope or expectation for your emancipation and salvation in the future' (25).

[Note :—Verse nos. 15-25 can be called the gospel of Hanuman for Ravana.]

श्रुत्वामृतास्वादसमानभाषितं तद्वायुसूनोर्दशकन्धरोऽसुरः।
अमृष्यमाणोऽतिरुषा कपीश्वरं जगाद रक्तान्तविलोचनो ज्वलन्।।26।।

śrutvāmṛtāsvādasamānabhāṣitaṃ
tadvāyusūnordaśakandharo'suraḥ /
amṛṣyamāṇo'tiruṣā kapīśvaraṃ
jagāda raktāntavilocano jvalan //

The 10-headed demon Ravana heard the nectar-like and sweet words spoken by the Lord of monkeys, Hanuman. He turned red in the eyes and burnt internally with fierce anger, making him extremely wrathful. He said contemptuously to Hanuman (26)—

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कथं ममाग्रे विलपस्यभीतवत् प्लवङ्गमानामधमोऽसि दुष्टधीः।
क एष रामः कतमो वनेचरो निहन्मि सुग्रीवयुतं नराधमम्।।27।।

kathaṃ mamāgre vilapasyabhītavat
plavaṅgamānāmadhamo'si duṣṭadhīḥ /
ka eṣa rāmaḥ katamo vanecaro
nihanmi sugrīvayutaṃ narādhamam //

'Oh you wicked one! You are the most wretched and lowly amongst the monkeys. How dare you squeak (speak or lecture) with a big mouth in front of me like a preacher, boldly and without any fear? Who are these two—Sri Ram and the forest dwelling creature (Sugriv)! [That is, what value or importance do they have in front of me, and how can they compare themselves with my strength?] I can kill that lowly and wretched man (Sri Ram) and Sugriv myself single handedly (27).

त्वां चाद्य हत्वा जनकात्मजां ततो निहन्मि रामं सहलक्ष्मणं ततः।
सुग्रीवमग्रे बलिनं कपीश्वरं सवानरं हन्म्यचिरेण वानर।
श्रुत्वा दशग्रीववचः स मारुतिर्विवृद्धकोपेन दहन्निवासुरम्।।28।।

tvāṃ cādya hatvā janakātmajāṃ tato
nihanmi rāmaṃ sahalakṣmaṇaṃ tataḥ /
sugrīvamagre balinaṃ kapīśvaraṃ
savānaraṃ hanmyacireṇa vānara /
śrutvā daśagrīvavacaḥ sa māruti-
rvivṛddhakopena dahannivāsuram //

Today I shall slay you first, and then I shall kill the daughter of Janak (Sita). After that I shall slay Sri Ram along with Laxman, but before that I shall kill the most brave and strong king of monkeys Sugriv along with his entire army'.

Hearing these boastful words of Ravana, the 10-headed one, the son of the Wind God, Hanuman, felt very exasperated and peeved. He sternly rebuked him with enhanced anger, which apparently seemed to burn (scorch, excite, incite, stoke the anger of, arouse and tease) Ravana further (28).

न मे समा रावणकोटयोऽधम रामस्य दासोऽहमपारविक्रमः।
श्रुत्वातिकोपेन हनूमतो वचो दशाननो राक्षसमेवमब्रवीत्।।29।।

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na me samā rāvaṇakoṭayo'dhama rāmasya dāso'hamapāravikramaḥ /
śrutvātikopena hanūmato vaco daśānano rākṣasamevamabravīt //

Hanuman said, 'Oh you wretched, mean and lowly one! Even crores (millions) of Ravanas like you cannot compare themselves with me. Don't you know—I am a humble servant (subordinate, follower, devotee and messenger) of Sri Ram, and there is no limit to my strength, valour, prowess and potentials'.

Hearing these angry words of great scorn, spoken with utter disdain and contempt by Hanuman, Ravana ordered vengefully and indignantly to a demon (29).

पार्श्वे स्थितं मारय खण्डशः कपिं पश्यन्तु सर्वेऽसुरमित्रबान्धवाः।
निवारयामास ततो विभीषणो महासुरं सायुधमुद्यतं वधे।
राजन्वधार्हो न भवेत्कथञ्चन प्रतापयुक्तैः पररा जवानरः।।30।।

pārśve sthitaṃ māraya khaṇḍaśaḥ kapiṃ
paśyantu sarve'suramitrabāndhavāḥ /
nivārayāmāsa tato vibhīṣaṇo
mahāsuraṃ sāyudhamudyataṃ vadhe /
rājanvadhārho na bhavetkathañcana
pratāpayuktaiḥ pararājavānaraḥ //

'Thrash this monkey who is standing near me, and hack him into pieces. Let all the demons, their friends and compatriots enjoy this novel spectacle'.

Then Vibhishan intervened to stop that furious, ferocious and aggressive demon, who was ready with sharp weapons to kill Hanuman. He said, 'Oh king (Ravana)! It does not seem proper and fit at all for a powerful, majestic, famed and brave king like you to kill the monkey messenger of another king (30).

[Note :—This is the first time that Vibhishan has made his appearance here. In Tulsidas' Ramayan he had met Hanuman prior to his meeting with Sita.]

हतेऽस्मिन्वानरे दूते वार्तां को वा निवेदयेत्। रामाय त्वं यमुद्दिश्य वधाय समुपस्थितः।।31।।
अतो वधसमं किञ्चिदन्यच्चिन्तय वानरे। सचिह्नो गच्छतु हरिर्यं दृष्ट्वायास्यति द्रुतम्।।32।।
रामः सुग्रीवसहितस्ततो युद्धं भवेत्तव। विभीषणवचः श्रुत्वा रावणोऽप्येतदब्रवीत्।।33।।

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hate'sminvānare dute vārtāṃ ko vā nivedayet /
rāmāya tvaṃ yamuddiśya vadhāya samupasthitaḥ //
ato vadhasamaṃ kiñcidanyaccintaya vānare /
sacihno gacchatu hariryaṃ dṛṣṭvāyāsyati drutam //
rāmaḥ sugrīvosahitastato yuddhaṃ bhavettava /
vibhīṣaṇavacaḥ śrutvā rāvaṇo'pyetadabravīt //

If this monkey messenger is killed, then who will convey the news (that Sita is in your captivity) to Sri Ram whom you are so eager and determined to kill (31).

Hence, instead of killing him, decide on any other equivalent punishment for this monkey. He will carry the marks or scars of those injuries back with him, seeing which, and feeling challenged and insulted (32), Sri Ram shall come here with great haste along with Sugriv. Then you can fight with him (and fulfill your vow of killing them)'. Hearing this advice of Vibhishan, Ravana said (33)—

वानराणां हि लाङ्गूले महामानो भवेत्किल। अतो वस्त्रादिभिः पुच्छं वेष्टयित्वा प्रयत्नतः ।। 34 ।।
वह्निना योजयित्वैनं भ्रामयित्वा पुरेऽभितः। विसर्जयत पश्यन्तु सर्वे वानरयूथपाः ।। 35 ।।

vānarāṇāṃ hi lāṅgūle mahāmāno bhavetkila /
ato vastrādibhiḥ pucchaṃ veṣṭayitvā prayatnataḥ //
vahninā yojayitvainaṃ bhrāmayitvā pure'bhitaḥ /
visarjayata paśyantu sarve vānarayūthapāḥ //

'The monkeys are very fond of their tails. So, make efforts to wrap his tail with a lot of cloth, rags etc. and then set fire to it. After that, take him around the city and then set him free so that when he goes back, all the monkey chieftains will see his miserable condition and scarred body' (35).

तथेति शणपट्टैश्च वस्त्रैरन्यैरनेकशः। तैलाक्तैर्वेष्टयामासुर्लाङ्गूलं मारुतेर्दृढम् ।। 36 ।।
पुच्छाग्रे किञ्चिदनलं दीपयित्वाथ राक्षसाः। रज्जुभिः सुदृढं बद्ध्वा धृत्वा तं बलिनोऽसुराः ।। 37 ।।
समन्ताद् भ्रामयामासुश्चोरोऽयमिति वादिनः। तूर्यघोषैर्घोषयन्तस्ताडयन्तो मुहुर्मुहुः ।। 38 ।।

tatheti śaṇapaṭṭaiśca vastrairanyairanekaśaḥ /
tailāktairveṣṭayāmāsurlāṅgūlaṃ māruterdṛḍham //
pucchāgre kiñcidanalaṃ dīpayitvātha rākṣasāḥ /
rajjubhiḥ sudṛḍhaṃ baddhvā dhṛtvā taṃ balino'surāḥ //

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samantād bhrāmayāmāsuścoro'yamiti vādinaḥ /
tūryaghoṣairghoṣayantastāḍayanto muhurmuhuḥ //

Saying alright, the demons wrapped the tail of Hanuman, the son of the Wind God, very firmly with bundles after bundles of different types of tattered clothes and rags dipped in oil, and then banded them together with long strips of hemp or flex (36). Then they ignited one end of the tail and tied him firmly with a rope so that he does not escape. Then some of the more powerful and strong demons (37) took him around the city, repeatedly kicking him or beating him and sounding the trumpet or a bugle while proclaiming publicly that 'this is a thief' (in order to humiliate Hanuman) (38).

[Note—This scene is reminiscent of Lord Jesus' journey with the cross before he was crucified. He was also mocked and beaten, ridiculed and laughed at.]

हनूमतापि तत्सर्वं सोढं किञ्चिच्चिकीर्षुणा। गत्वा तु पश्चिमद्वारसमीपं तत्र मारुतिः।। 39।।
सूक्ष्मो बभूव बन्धेभ्यो निःसृतः पुनरप्यसौ। बभूव पर्वताकारस्तत उत्प्लुत्य गोपुरम्।।40।।

hanūmatāpi tatsarvaṃ soḍhaṃ kiñciccikirṣuṇā /
gatvā tu paścimadvārasamīpaṃ tatra mārutiḥ //
sūkṣma babhūva bandhebhyo niḥsṛtaḥ punarapyasau /
babhūva parvatākārastata utplutya gopuram //

Hanuman tolerated all this humiliation in order to display some spectacular fireworks and novel tricks that he had planned in advance. When they reached near the western gate of the city, the son of the Wind God (39) immediately reduced his size (i.e. became smaller still) so that he could easily slip out of (i.e. free himself from) the trappings (ropes and layers after layers of cloth tied tightly around his tail). Then he assumed a colossus mountain-like form and leapt atop the spire or tower of the gate (40).

[Note :—As is evident from verse nos. 39-40, Ravana and his cohorts had overlooked one very important factor while tying Hanuman with ropes or wrapping his tail with oil-dipped clothes—that is, he had the power to reduce or increase the dimensions and size of the body. This he did with great success and aplomb to easily free himself from the trappings of ropes and clothes. Another option for Hanuman was to extend or expand his body, in which case the ropes and shackles would have snapped and fallen apart like nine-pins.]

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तत्रैकं स्तम्भमादाय हत्वा तान् रक्षिणः क्षणात्। विचार्य कार्यशेषं स प्रासादाग्राद् गृहाद् गृहम्।। 41।।
उत्प्लुत्योत्प्लुत्य सन्दीप्तपुच्छेन महता कपिः। ददाह लङ्कामखिलां साट्टप्रासादतोरणाम्।। 42।।

tatraikaṃ stambhamādāya hatvā tān rakṣiṇaḥ kṣaṇāt /
vicārya kāryaśeṣaṃ sa prāsādāgrād gṛhād gṛham //
utplutyoplutya sandīptapucchena mahatā kapiḥ /
dadāha laṅkāmakhilāṃ sāṭṭaprāsādatoraṇām //

From there, he uprooted a pillar and killed all the demons with it in a short while (using it as a battering club or a war mace, rapidly moving it in circles and smashing the demons who accompanied him round the city). Then deciding on his next course of action, he jumped from the front of one building of the city to another, and continued hopping, skipping and jumping from house to house (41).

He used his burning tail to set fire to individual palaces, attics and terraces as well as the rest of the city of Lanka which always had a festive look and perpetually decorated with banners, buntings, festoons etc. (42).

[Note :—When Hanuman had slipped out of his bondage as in verse nos. 39-40 by assuming a miniature form, obviously his tail also slipped out with his body. Then he assumed a colossus, huge, mountain-like form. It's absurd to think that his tail remained slender and small and his body became mountain like. So, the most logical and plausible explanation of the burning of Lanka appears to be that, to begin with, he had elongated his slender tail like a flexible rubber tube which the demons went on covering with layers after umpteen layers of cloth dipped in oil. This 'tube' literally wend its way like a slithering snake for quite some formidable distance, say a mile or two or more, through the streets of the city. Then Hanuman retracted his tail when he became miniature in size to get out of the snare of ropes that had been used to tie him up. The tail was slyly and stealthily taken out from inside the outer covering of clothes, almost unnoticed by the demons; so when they paraded him through the city, the oil soaked cloth and other wrappings were actually being dragged by Hanuman behind him, they were trailing behind him, hooked to the end of his tail. After he freed himself by becoming small in size and thereby loosening himself from the tight ropes, he must have caught hold of the nearest end of the long tube-like layering of cloth, which was like a cylindrically thin hollow rubber tube by now, and resembled a wick burning at one end and harmless at the other, to swing it viciously in

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circles, dash it, jerk it, shake it, twirl it and twist it in order to spread the fire in the city. We must remember that it was well-soaked in inflammable oil, and wherever the burning oil fell on the ground, which must have already become well drenched and smudgy and slushy with spilled-over oil from oil containers and excess oil dripping from Hanuman's tail, new flames would leap up afresh. Thus the fire could spread so rapidly. In the view of the author, this is what might have happened during the burning of Lanka. Further, though we are made to understand that Lanka was 'made of gold', it does not mean that the walls, the roofs etc. were made of solid gold. Solid metal melts into liquid but does not burn with leaping flames as is the case with wood. So, in all probability, timber was the main construction material used with gold foil as covering plaster in the buildings of Lanka. This will explain both the phenomenon—leaping flames as well as molten gold flowing through the streets. This latter happening (of molten gold flowing through the streets of Lanka in thin streams) has been described by Tulsidas in his Kavitawali, Sundar Kand.]

हा तात पुत्र नाथेति क्रन्दमानाः समन्ततः। व्याप्ताः प्रासादशिखरेऽप्यारूढा दैत्ययोषितः।। 43।।
देवता इव दृश्यन्ते पतन्त्यः पावकेऽखिलाः। विभीषणगृहं त्यक्त्वा सर्वं भस्मीकृतं पुरम्।।44।।

hā tāta putra nātheti krandamānāḥ samantataḥ/
vyāptāḥ prāsādaśikhare'pyārūḍhā daityayoṣitaḥ//
devatā iva dṛśyante patantyaḥ pāvake'khilāḥ/
vibhīṣaṇagṛhaṃ tyaktvā sarvaṃ bhasmīkṛtaṃ puram//

At that time, weeping and shouting 'Oh dear, oh son, oh husband' in dismay, the panicky demonesses, who were woefully lamenting and wailing gravely everywhere, such as on top of the palaces, fell in the burning fire (while trying to escape). All the demonesses appeared like myriad Gods. [It means they were present everywhere in the city like Gods are present everywhere. Previously they were not seen outside their homes as Gods are usually not visible except at the time of invocation during the fire sacrifice etc. Here burning of Lanka is the fire sacrifice, and the demonesses are like Gods who have come to witness it.] In this manner, except for the residence of Vibhishan, the whole city was reduced to ashes (43-44).

[Note :—Goswami Tulsidas has painted a very lively and vivid picture of burning of Lanka in his masterpiece work 'Kavitawali' in its Sundar Kand of which an English version by the author is available separately.]

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तत उत्प्लुत्य जलधौ हनूमान्मारुतात्मजः। लाङ्गूलं मज्जयित्वान्तः स्वस्थचित्तो बभूव सः।।45।।
वायोः प्रियसखित्वाच्च सीतया प्रार्थितोऽनलः। न ददाह हरेः पुच्छं बभूवात्यन्तशीतलः।।46।।

tata utplutya jaladhau hanūmānmārutātmajaḥ /
lāṅgūlaṃ majjayitvāntaḥ svasthacitto babhūva saḥ //
vāyoḥ priyasakhitvācca sītayā prārthito'nalaḥ /
na dadāha hareḥ pucchaṃ babhūvātyantaśītalaḥ //

After that, Hanuman, who was the son of the Wind God, jumped into the ocean to douse his burning tail. He then felt relaxed and refreshed (45). It was because of Sita's prayers and because the fire was a fast friend of the Wind God that it did not burn Hanuman's tail. On the contrary, it became very cool (and cooperative) for him (46).

यन्नामसंस्मरणधूतसमस्तपापास्तापत्रयानलमपीह तरन्ति सद्यः।
तस्यैव किं रघुवरस्य विशिष्टदूतः सन्तप्यते कथमसौ प्रकृतानलेन।।47।।

yannāmasaṃsmaraṇadhūtasamastapāpā-
stāpatrayānalamapīha taranti sadyaḥ /
tasyaiva kiṃ raghuvarasya viśiṣṭadūtaḥ
santapyate kathamasau prakṛtānalena //

How can this worldly fire ever cause any harm to (or can burn, torment or scorch) Raghubar's (Sri Ram's) special messenger, because by merely remembering his divine and holy name, a person is liberated and delivered from all his sins, evils, misdeeds and misdemeanors; he immediately overcomes or literally crosses over the horribly tormenting fire represented by the three Traitaps that torment him and give him immense troubles and tribulations (47).

[Note :—The three Traitaps which torment a creature are the following—(i) Daihik–pertaining to the body, such as diseases and old age; (ii) Daivik–pertaining to unfavourable Gods and stars; and (iii) Bhautik–pertaining to other creatures of this terrestrial world, such as enemies and cruel animals.]

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Sundar Kand — Canto 5

Hanuman's departure from Lanka; Arrival at Kishkindha; Conveying Sita's message to Sri Ram

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

ततः सीतां नमस्कृत्य हनूमानब्रवीद्वचः। आज्ञापयतु मां देवि भवती रामसन्निधिम्।।1।।
गच्छामि रामस्त्वां द्रष्टुमागमिष्यति सानुजः। इत्युक्त्वा त्रिःपरिक्रम्य जानकीं मारुतात्मजः।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tataḥ sītāṃ namaskṛtya hanūmānabravīdvacaḥ/
ājñāpayatu māṃ devi bhavatī rāmasannidhim//
gacchāmi rāmastvāṃ draṣṭumāgamiṣyati sānujaḥ/
ityuktvā triḥparikramya jānakīṃ mārutātmajaḥ//

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Then, Hanuman went to Sita, bowed before her and said, 'Oh goddess! Give me your permission. I am now going back to Sri Ram (1). He will come here along with his younger brother (Laxman) to see you very soon'. Saying this, the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) circumambulated Janki (Sita) three times (2).

प्रणम्य प्रस्थितो गन्तुमिदं वचनमब्रवीत्। देवि गच्छामि भद्रं ते तूर्णं द्रक्ष्यसि राघवम्।।3।।
लक्ष्मणं च ससुग्रीवं वानरायुतकोटिभिः। ततः प्राह हनूमन्तं जानकी दुःखकर्शिता।।4।।
त्वां दृष्ट्वा विस्मृतं दुःखमिदानीं त्वं गमिष्यसि। इतः परं कथं वर्ते रामवार्ताश्रुतिं विना।।5।।

praṇamya prasthito gantumidaṃ vacanamabravīt/
devi gacchāmi bhadraṃ te tūrṇaṃ drakṣyasi rāghavam//
lakṣmaṇaṃ ca sasugrīvaṃ vānarāyutakoṭibhiḥ/
tataḥ prāha hanūmantaṃ jānakī duḥkhakarśitā//
tvāṃ dṛṣṭvā vismṛtaṃ duḥkhamidānīṃ tvaṃ gamiṣyasi/
itaḥ paraṃ kathaṃ varte rāmavārtāśrutiṃ vinā//

Then he bowed before her once again with palms joined together in submission, and went a short distance from her in order to go back, but then looked back to her again to finally bid her goodbye. He said, 'Oh goddess! I am going. Oh you blessed one! Very soon you will see Raghav (Sri Ram) (3) along with Laxman and Sugriv who will be accompanied by crores (millions) of monkeys'. Then Janki (Sita), who was extremely weakened due to protracted sorrows and miseries that had been hounding her, said to Hanuman (4), 'I had forgotten about

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my miseries and torments upon seeing you. Now even you are going away. How will I survive now without receiving or hearing any news or information of Sri Ram?' (5).

मारुति उवाच

यद्येवं देवि मे स्कन्धमारोह क्षणमात्रतः। रामेण योजयिष्यामि मन्यसे यदि जानकि।।6।।

māruti uvāca

yadyevaṃ devi me skandhamāroha kṣaṇamātrataḥ /
rāmeṇa yojayiṣyāmi manyase yadi jānaki //

Hanuman (Maruti) replied, 'Oh goddess! If this is the case and if you agree (think proper), then you can ride on my shoulders and I shall take you to meet Sri Ram instantly (without a second thought and in a very short time) (6).

सीता उवाच

रामः सागरमाशोष्य बद्ध्वा वा शरपञ्जरैः। आगत्य वानरैः सार्धं हत्वा रावणमाहवे।।7।।
मां नयेद्यदि रामस्य कीर्तिर्भवति शाश्वती। अतो गच्छ कथं चापि प्राणान्सन्धारयाम्यहम्।।8।।

sītā uvāca

rāmaḥ sāgaramāśoṣya baddhvā vā śarapañjaraiḥ /
āgatya vānaraiḥ sārdhaṃ hatvā rāvaṇamāhave //
māṃ nayedyadi rāmasya kīrtirbhavati śāśvatī /
ato gaccha kathaṃ cāpi prāṇānsandhārayāmyaham //

Sita said, 'If Sri Ram could dry up the ocean or tame (tie or bridge or subdue) it with arrows, come here along with monkeys, and kill Ravana in the war (7), it will give him eternal fame, world wide renown, unmatched honour and immense glory. Therefore, you should go now. I will survive somehow (till the time he comes)' (8).

[Note :—If Sita were to accept Hanuman's proposal as described in verse no. 6, that would have ended her torments and miseries forthwith. With what Hanuman had done to Lanka, it would be unimaginable for any demon to gather sufficient courage to pursue and stop him. That would have left Sri Ram's main purpose of spending fourteen years in the forest with the object of killing Ravana and other tyrannical, cruel and ferocious demons unfulfilled. Further, Sita's wish to suffer a little more so that her Lord attains fame and glory, shows her in very good light. She was confident that Sri Ram would vanquish Ravana—otherwise the rejection

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of Hanuman's offer would have been most impossible and almost suicidal for her. Normally she would have jumped at the golden opportunity to escape from her tormentors and fled, but that would not have given the Lord the required chance of establishing his fame and glory.]

इति प्रस्थापितो वीरः सीतया प्रणिपत्य ताम्। जगाम पर्वतस्याग्रे गन्तुं पारं महोदधेः।। 9।।
तत्र गत्वा महासत्त्वः पादाभ्यां पीडयन् गिरिम्। जगाम वायुवेगेन पर्वतश्च महीतलम्।। 10।।
गतो महीसमानत्वं त्रिंशद्योजनमुच्छ्रितः। मारुतिर्गगनान्तःस्थो महाशब्दं चकार सः।। 11।।

iti prasthāpito vīraḥ sītayā praṇipatya tām /
jagāma parvatasyāgre gantuṃ pāraṃ mahodadheḥ //
tatra gatvā mahāsattvaḥ pādābhyāṃ pīḍayan girim /
jagāma vāyuvegena parvataśca mahītalam //
gato mahīsamānatvaṃ triṃśadyojanamuchritaḥ /
mārutirgaganāntaḥstho mahāśabdaṃ cakāra saḥ //

Being finally bid farewell by Sita, Hanuman bowed to her once again. Then the brave one climbed the summit of a mountain in order to launch himself to cross the ocean (9). There (on the summit of the mountain) the most valorous and valiant Hanuman pressed the mountain by his foot and sped off with the speed of wind. The mountain which was thirty Yojans (i.e. 30 × 8 = 240 miles) in height was pressed into the earth with such a great force that it became almost flattened. While cruising through the sky, the son of the Wind God, Maruti (Hanuman), roared very formidably like thunder rolling across the skies (10-11).

[Note :—In modern terms, it is simple to visualise the event if compared to a rocket launch with a heavy payload. The downward thrust generated by the leap-frog action of Hanuman's legs was sufficient enough to flatten the protuberance on the earth (the hill), which acted more like a spring board making him air-borne because of the counter thrust upwards. Hanuman launched himself like a rocket or a missile. Once he was in the air and the pressure thus removed, the spring (the hill) tried to regain its former shape, but such was the weight launched, that it could rise only 4 fingers, and not to the original height. However, the pressing of the mountain by 30 Yojans seems highly exaggerated and hyperbolic. Well, in ancient classical literature it was usual to magnify events out of proportion in order to give them a dimension of grandeur and majesty. Such as for example, saying hundreds of thousands of soldiers were sent to catch hold of a single Hanuman in the Ashok grove in Canto 3, verse nos. 78-79, which is apparently and obviously exaggerated statement.]

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तं श्रुत्वा वानराः सर्वे ज्ञात्वा मारुतिमागतम्। हर्षेण महताविष्टाः शब्दं चक्रुर्महास्वनम्।। 12।।
शब्देनैव विजानीमः कृतकार्यः समागतः। हनूमानेव पश्यध्वं वानरा वानरर्षभम्।। 13।।

taṃ śrutvā vānarāḥ sarve jñātvā mārutimāgatam /
harṣeṇa mahatāviṣṭāḥ śabdaṃ cakrurmahāsvanam //
śabdenaiva vijānimaḥ kṛtakāryaḥ samāgataḥ /
hanūmāneva paśyadhvaṃ vānarā vānararṣabham //

Hearing his thunderous roar, the monkeys (waiting for him on this side of the ocean) realised that Hanuman was returning from Lanka. They were filled with joy and exhilaration, and cheered and applauded loudly (12). The monkeys said to each other, 'This terrible thunderous roar itself shows that Hanuman has been successful in his mission, and is returning. Oh monkeys! Look, is it not Hanuman?' All the monkeys were full of ecstasy and exhilaration (13).

[Note :—Verse no. 11 tells us that Hanuman just launched himself from the shore of Lanka which was roughly eight hundred miles from where the monkeys were waiting for him on this side of the ocean. The very fact that they heard 'that sound' shows that it was not an ordinary yell of joy from Hanuman, but was indeed a boom from the launch of a rocket-like contraption which had made his journey across the ocean possible. This thrust might have flattened the mountain from which Hanuman had launched himself, creating a high decibel boom and seismic tremor that rolled across the waters and reached the shores where other monkeys were assembled and waiting for him to return. This sort of boom is created when the sound barrier is broken. Hence, Hanuman had achieved what in modern parlance can be called the super sonic speed, and the sound was a sonic boom which reverberated and rolled across the ocean and reached this side of the shore, aided and enhanced by the flattening of the mountain and its accompanying seismic after effects and earth-quake like shocks or tremors.]

एवं ब्रुवत्सु वीरेषु वानरेषु स मारुतिः। अवतीर्य गिरेर्मूर्ध्नि न वानरानिदमब्रवीत्।। 14।।
दृष्टा सीता मया लङ्का धर्षिता च सकानना। सम्भाषितो दशग्रीवस्ततोऽहं पुनरागतः।। 15।।

evaṃ bruvatsu vīreṣu vānareṣu sa mārutiḥ /
avatīrya girermurdhni vānarānidamabravīt //
dṛṣṭā sītā mayā laṅkā dharṣitā ca sakānanā /
sambhāṣito daśagrīvastato'haṃ punarāgataḥ //

While the monkeys were discussing amongst themselves (as in

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verse nos. 12-13 above), the son of the Wind God alighted on that mountain summit where they were all huddled together trying to see him come across the sky. He said to them (14), 'I have seen Sita, reduced Lanka and the Ashok grove to rubble and had talked with Ravana. After that (having accomplished my task), I have come here (15).

इदानीमेव गच्छामो रामसुग्रीवसन्निधिम्। इत्युक्ता वानराः सर्वे हर्षेणालिङ्ग्य मारुतिम्।। 16।।
केचिच्चुचुम्बुर्लाङ्गूलं ननृतुः केचिदुत्सुकाः। हनूमता समेतास्ते जग्मुः प्रस्रवणं गिरिम्।।17।।

idānīmeva gacchāmo rāmasugrīvasannidhim /
ityuktā vānarāḥ sarve harṣeṇāliṅgya mārutim //
keciccucumburlāṅgūlaṃ nanṛtuḥ kecidutsukāḥ /
hanūmatā sametāste jagmuḥ prasravaṇaṃ girim //

We shall go to meet Sri Ram and Sugriv right now'. All the monkeys were extremely delighted and exhilarated, and they embraced him most affectionately and cheerfully (16). Some kissed his tail and some others began dancing with joyous ecstasy. After that, all of them accompanied Hanuman and went to Mt. Prastravan (literally the rocky mountain where Lord Ram was patiently waiting for their return from the mission) (17).

गच्छन्तो ददृशुर्वीरा वनं सुग्रीवरक्षितम्। मधुसंज्ञं तदा प्राहुरङ्गदं वानरर्षभाः।। 18।।
क्षुधिताः स्मो वयं वीर देह्यनुज्ञां महामते। भक्षयामः फलान्यद्य पिबामोऽमृतवन्मधु।। 19।।
सन्तुष्टा राघवं द्रष्टुं गच्छामोऽद्यैव सानुजम्।। 20।।

gacchanto dadṛśurvīrā vanaṃ sugrīvarakṣitam /
madhusaṃjñaṃ tadā prāhuraṅgadaṃ vānararṣabhāḥ //
kṣudhitāḥ smo vayaṃ vīra dehyanujñāṃ mahāmate /
bhakṣayāmaḥ phalānyadya pibāmo'mṛtavanmadhu //
santuṣṭā rāghavaṃ draṣṭuṃ gacchāmo'dyaiva sānujam //

While on their way, they happened to see Madhuvan (literally a forest of honeycombs) established and protected by Sugriv. They said to Angad (18), 'Oh the brave one! We are very hungry. Hence, oh the wise one, give us your permission so that we can eat the sweet fruits of this forest and drink its honey which is like nectar (19).

After that, being contented and well fed, we shall go to meet Raghav (Sri Ram) along with his younger brother (Laxman)' (20).

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अङ्गद उवाच

हनूमान्कृतकार्योऽयं पिबतैतत्प्रसादतः। जक्षध्वं फलमूलानि त्वरितं हरिसत्तमाः।।21।।
ततः प्रविश्य हरयः पातुमारेभिरे मधु। रक्षिणस्तानना दृत्य दधिवक्त्रेण नोदितान्।।22।।

aṅgada uvāca

hanūmānkṛtakāryo'yaṃ pibataitatprasādataḥ /
jakṣadhvaṃ phalamūlāni tvaritaṃ harisattamāḥ //
tataḥ praviśya harayaḥ pātumārebhire madhu /
rakṣiṇastānanādṛtya dadhivaktreṇa noditān //

Angad said, 'Hanuman has successfully done the task. Hence, oh the best amongst the monkeys, be quick in eating the fruits and edible roots as well as in drinking honey as a token of his blessing and good wishes for you (i.e. enjoy yourselves and celebrate the successful completion of the mission by drinking honey and eating fruits)' (21).

So the monkeys entered that forest, and giving two hoots to (i.e. not bothering about and neglecting) the forest guards sent by the 'white faced one' (Dadhimukh), they began drinking honey (to their heart's content) (22).

[Note :—Hanuman's successful completion of the mission is called a blessing for the monkeys in verse no. 21 because now they had no fear from either Sugriv or Sri Ram. It was a time to celebrate, and on such occasions, eating, drinking, revelry and merry making are accepted norms of behaviour. So, there was nothing to worry as such.]

पिबतस्ताडयामासुर्वानरान्वानरर्षभाः। ततस्तान्मुष्टिभिः पादैश्चूर्णयित्वा पपुर्मधु।।23।।
ततो दधिमुखः क्रुद्धः सुग्रीवस्य स मातुलः। जगाम रक्षिभिः सार्धं यत्र राजा कपीश्वरः।।24।।

pibatastāḍayāmāsurvānarānvānararṣabhāḥ /
tatastānmuṣṭibhiḥ pādaiścūrṇayitvā papurmadhu //
tato dadhimukhaḥ kruddhaḥ sugrīvasya sa mātulaḥ /
jagāma rakṣibhiḥ sārdhaṃ yatra rājā kapīśvaraḥ //

When those monkey guards saw the army of monkeys drinking honey and tried to stop them by using force, they resisted and retaliated by kicks and fist-blows, and reduced the guards to pulp (i.e. the guards were crushed and mercilessly beaten back). They kept on drinking honey merrily (23). Then Sugriv's maternal uncle Dadhimukh became annoyed and peeved, and accompanied by

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other forest guards, he went to the king of monkeys (Sugriv) to complain (24).

गत्वा तमब्रवीद्देव चिरकालाभिरक्षितम्। नष्टं मधुवनं तेऽद्य कुमारेण हनूमता।।25।।
श्रुत्वा दधिमुखेनोक्तं सुग्रीवो हृष्टमानसः। दृष्ट्वागतो न सन्देहः सीतां पवननन्दनः।।26।।
नो चेन्मधुवनं द्रष्टुं समर्थः को भवेन्मम। तत्रापि वायुपुत्रेण कृतं कार्यं न संशयः।।27।।

gatvā tamabravīddeva cirakālābhirakṣitam /
naṣṭaṃ madhuvanaṃ te'dya kumāreṇa hanūmatā //
śrutvā dadhimukhenoktaṃ sugrīvo hṛṣṭamānasaḥ /
dṛṣṭvāgato na sandehaḥ sītāṃ pavananandanaḥ //
no cenmadhuvanaṃ draṣṭuṃ samarthaḥ ko bhavenmama /
tatrāpi vāyuputreṇa kṛtaṃ kāryaṃ na saṃśayaḥ //

On reaching there, he said to Sugriv, 'The forest of honey (i.e. a forest where the trees are laden with honeycombs), which you had diligently protected and carefully nursed for a long time, has been laid to waste by the prince (Angad) and Hanuman' (25).

Hearing the words of Dadhimukh, Sugriv was happy. He said, 'There is no doubt that the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) has come back after seeing Sita (26). Otherwise who had the guts to even glance at my forest of honey? And out of them, it is without doubt, it is the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) who must have done the work (and no one else)' (27).

श्रुत्वा सुग्रीववचनं हृष्टो रामस्तमब्रवीत्। किमुच्यते त्वया राजन्वचः सीताकथान्वितम्।।28।।
सुग्रीवस्त्वब्रवीद्वाक्यं देव दृष्टावनीसुता। हनूमत्प्रमुखाः सर्वे प्रविष्टा मधुकाननम्।।29।।

śrutvā sugrīvavacanaṃ hṛṣṭo rāmastamabravīt /
kimucyate tvayā rājanvacaḥ sītākathānvitam //
sugrīvastvabravīdvākyaṃ deva dṛṣṭāvanīsutā /
hanūmatpramukhāḥ sarve praviṣṭā madhukānanam //

Hearing the words of Sugriv, Sri Ram became delighted and cheerful in heart. He asked, 'Oh king (Sugriv)! What are you talking about Sita?' (28). Sugriv replied, 'Oh Lord! It appears that the daughter of the earth (Sita) has been seen (i.e. located) because all of the monkeys, with Hanuman being the chief among them, have entered the forest of honey (29).

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भक्षयन्ति स्म सकलं ताडयन्ति स्म रक्षिणः। अकृत्वा देवकार्यं ते द्रष्टुं मधुवनं मम।।30।।
न समर्थास्ततो देवी दृष्ट्वा सीतेति निश्चितम्। रक्षिणो वो भयं मास्तु गत्वा ब्रूत ममाज्ञया।।31।।

bhakṣayanti sma sakalaṃ tāḍayanti sma rakṣiṇaḥ/
akṛtvā devakāryaṃ te draṣṭuṃ madhuvanaṃ mama//
na samarthāstato devī dṛṣṭā sīteti niścitam/
rakṣiṇo vo bhayaṃ māstu gatvā brūta mamājñayā//

There, they are eating everything and are beating the guards. Without doing your job, they couldn't have dared to look at my forest of honey, what to talk of eating fruits and drinking honey (30). Hence it is certain that they have seen (met and have found out about) Sita. Oh guards! Don't be afraid. Go and tell them my command (31)—

वानरानङ्गदमुखानानयध्वं ममान्तिकम्। श्रुत्वा सुग्रीववचनं गत्वा ते वायुवेगतः।।32।।
हनूमत्प्रमुखानूचुर्गच्छतेश्वरशासनात्। द्रष्टुमिच्छति सुग्रीवः सरामो लक्ष्मणान्वितः।।33।।

vānarānaṅgadamukhānānayadhvaṃ mamāntikam/
śrutvā sugrīvavacanaṃ gatvā te vāyuvegataḥ//
hanūmatpramukhānūcurgacchateśvaraśāsanāt /
draṣṭumicchati sugrīvaḥ sarāmo lakṣmaṇānvitaḥ//

'Bring Angad and other monkeys to me'. Hearing the orders of Sugriv, the guards went with great haste (literally, with the speed of wind) (32). They said to Hanuman and others, 'It is the order of the king that you should go to him immediately, because Sugriv along with Sri Ram and Laxman wants to see and meet you (33).

युष्मानतीव हृष्टास्ते त्वरयन्ति महाबलाः। तथेत्यम्बरमासाद्य ययुस्ते वानरोत्तमाः।।34।।
हनूमन्तं पुरस्कृत्य युवराजं तथाङ्गदम्। रामसुग्रीवयोरग्रे निपेतुर्भुवि सत्वरम्।।35।।

yuṣmānatīva hṛṣṭāste tvarayanti mahābalā/
tathetyambaramāsādya yayuste vānarottamāḥ//
hanūmantaṃ puraskṛtya yuvarājaṃ tathāṅgadam/
rāmasugrīvayoragre nipeturbhuvi satvaram//

Oh the most valiant and valorous ones! He is very pleased with you all and is therefore calling all of you soon as possible'. Then saying 'alright', that group of monkeys who were superior to the rest and best among monkeys, proceeded by the path of the sky (i.e. almost flew) to where Sugriv was (34).

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They kept Hanuman and Angad in the vanguard (in the front like a victorious, conquering and prized commander returning victorious from the battlefront) and landed on the ground in front of Sri Ram and Sugriv (35).

[Note :—The monkeys of today can't fly. Perhaps in the time of Sri Ram, they had the power to fly. This means that either they had wings, or the science of flying was so evolved that they had strap-on propellers or rockets to propel them in the sky at will. This shows that the science of flying or rocket technology existed in an advanced stage at the time. It was almost like a sky-bike strapped around the waist or shoulder, enabling the wearer to fly like birds.]

हनूमान् राघवं प्राह दृष्टा सीता निरामया। साष्टाङ्गं प्रणिपत्याग्रे रामं पश्चाद्धरीश्वरम्।। 36।।
कुशलं प्राह राजेन्द्र जानकी त्वां शुचान्विता। अशोकवनिकामध्ये शिंशपामूलमाश्रिता।। 37।।

hanūmāna rāghavaṃ prāha dṛṣṭā sītā nirāmayā/
sāṣṭāṅgaṃ praṇipatyāgre rāmaṃ paścāddharīśvaram//
kuśalaṃ prāha rājendra jānakī tvāṃ sucānvitā/
aśokavanikāmadhye śiṃśapāmūlamāśritā//

Hanuman prostrated himself reverentially, to pay his obeisance, first before Sri Ram and then before the king of monkeys, Sugriv. Then he said to Sri Ram, 'I have returned after having seen Sita's welfare and well-being' (36). Oh King of kings! Janki, who is submerged in sorrows and miseries, has told me to convey about her welfare to you. She is sitting in the center of the Ashok grove under a Shinshupa tree (the Indian red wood tree) (37).

[Note :—Obviously, Sita was not happy as it might sound on hearing what Hanuman says in verse no. 36. She was neither healthy, disease free (literally 'Niramaya'—fujke;k) nor happy. What Hanuman intended was to prevent the use of any shocking words or phrase at the very outset because of the danger of Sri Ram being unable to bear the shock of it and what was to be said after the initial introductory curtsey. The fact that the monkeys were cheerful and that Hanuman had seen Sita alive was sufficient for Sri Ram's morale and heart's contentedness. The good news is to be said first, and then gradually Hanuman described to him Sita's harried and precarious condition, and he finally closed his briefing with the reassuring words that bringing her back from the clutches of the enemy was not a great problem indeed— see verse nos. 51-52 below.]

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राक्षसीभिः परिवृता निराहारा कृशा प्रभो। हा राम राम रामेति शोचन्ती मलिनाम्बरा।। 38।।
एकवेणी मया दृष्टा शनैराश्वासिता शुभा। वृक्षशाखान्तरे स्थित्वा सूक्ष्मरूपेण ते कथाम्।। 39।।

rākṣasībhiḥ parivṛtā nirāhārā kṛśā prabho /
hā rāma rāma rāmeti śocantī malināmbarā //
ekaveṇī mayā dṛṣṭā śanairāśvāsitā śubhā /
vṛkṣaśākhāntare sthitvā sūkṣmarūpeṇa te kathām //

Oh Lord! She is always surrounded by fearsome demonesses. She has become very weak and emaciated because she has stopped taking food and water (i.e. she is fasting). She feels hopeless and hapless, and constantly laments gloomily and broods melancholically, saying repeatedly to herself 'Oh Ram' mournfully. Her clothes have become dirty and unkempt (38). The hairs have stuck together in a thick plait. I saw Sita in such a distressed and pitiable condition, and tried my best to comfort and reassure the auspicious one politely and slowly (so as not to arouse suspicion amongst the demonesses as well as not to alarm and scare Sita who was already on the verge of a nervous breakdown). On reaching there, I had assumed a miniature form and hid myself behind the leaves and branches of a tree. From there I narrated your divine and glorious story to her in brief (39).

जन्मारभ्य तवात्यर्थं दण्डकागमनं तथा। दशाननेन हरणं जानक्या रहिते त्वयि।। 40।।
सुग्रीवेण यथा मैत्री कृत्वा वालिनिबर्हणम्। मार्गणार्थं च वैदेह्याः सुग्रीवेण विसर्जिताः।। 41।।
महाबला महासत्त्वा हरयो जितकाशिनः। गताः सर्वत्र सर्वे वै तत्रैकोऽहमिहागतः।। 42।।
अहं सुग्रीवसचिवो दासोऽहं राघवस्य हि। दृष्टा यज्जानकी भाग्यात्प्रयासः फलितोऽद्य मे।। 43।।

janmārabhya tavātyarthaṃ daṇḍakāgamanaṃ tathā /
daśānanena haraṇaṃ jānakyā rahite tvayi //
sugrīveṇa yathā maitrī kṛtvā vālinibarhaṇam /
māraṇārthaṃ ca vaidehyā sugrīveṇa visarjitāḥ //
mahābalā mahāsattvā harayo jitakāśinaḥ /
gatāḥ sarvatra sarve vai tatraiko'hamihāgataḥ //
ahaṃ sugrīvasacivo dāso'haṃ rāghavasya hi /
dṛṣṭā yajjānakī bhāgyātprayāsaḥ phalito'dya me //

Beginning with your birth, your coming up to the Dandakaranya forest, how Sita, the daughter of Janak, was abducted (stolen) in your absence (40), and how you had befriended Sugriv and had slayed Vaali.

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In order to search the whereabouts of Vaidehi (Sita), how Sugriv had dispatched the monkeys (41)—who were very strong, brave, courageous, valorous, steadfast and victorious—in all the directions (42). And out of them, I told her, that I—who was a minister of Sugriv and a humble servant of Raghav (Sri Ram)—have come there to search for her. I expressed my exteme happiness at my good luck, immense fortune and sincere efforts which bore fruits and I had been successful in seeing Janki (Sita) alive today (43).

इत्युदीरितमाकर्ण्य सीता विस्फारितेक्षणा। केन वा कर्णपीयूषं श्रावितं मे शुभाक्षरम्।।44।।
यदि सत्यं तदायातु मद्दर्शनपथं तु सः। ततोऽहं वानराकारः सूक्ष्मरूपेण जानकीम्।।45।।
प्रणम्य प्राञ्जलिर्भूत्वा दूरादेव स्थितः प्रभो। पृष्टोऽहं सीतया कस्त्वमित्यादि बहुविस्तरम्।।46।।

ityudīritamākarṇya sītā visphāritekṣaṇā/
kena vā karṇapīyuṣaṃ śrāvitaṃ me śubhākṣaram//
yadi satyaṃ tadāyātu maddarśanapathaṃ tu saḥ/
tato'haṃ vānarākāraḥ sūkṣmarūpeṇa jānakīm//
praṇamya prāñjalirbhūtvā dūrādeva sthitaḥ prabho/
pṛṣṭo'haṃ sītayā kastvamityādi bahuvistaram//

Hearing my words, Sita's eyes lit up immediately with joy. She said, 'Who has made me hear this pleasant and auspicious news which is like nectar for my ears (44). If all of this is true, then the one who has said it must come in front of me'. So I presented myself before Janki (Sita) in the form of a miniature monkey (45). I bowed before her from a distance with palms joined together in submission and stood there. Then oh Lord, Sita asked me, 'who are you?', and many other things in detail (46).

मया सर्वं क्रमेणैव विज्ञापितमरिन्दम। पश्चान्मयार्पितं देव्यै भवद्दत्ताङ्गुलीयकम्।।47।।
तेन मामतिविश्वस्ता वचनं चेदमब्रवीत्। यथा दृष्टास्मि हनुमन्पीड्यमाना दिवानिशम्।।48।।

mayā sarvaṃ krameṇaiva vijñāpitamarindama/
paścānmayārpitaṃ devyai bhavaddattāṅgulīyakam//
tena māmativiśvastā vacanaṃ cedamabravīt/
yathā dṛṣṭāsmi hanumanpīḍyamānā divāniśam//

Oh the vanquisher of enemies (Sri Ram)! Then I told her everything in chronological order as they happened. After that, I gave her the finger ring you had given me (47). This made her believe me

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completely (without any shred of doubt), and she said to me, 'Oh Hanuman! The way you have seen me being tormented day and night (48)—

राक्षसीनां तर्जनैस्तत्सर्वं कथय राघवे। मयोक्तं देवि रामोऽपि त्वच्चिन्तापरिनिष्ठितः।। 49।।
परिशोचत्यहोरात्रं त्वद्वार्तां नाधिगम्य सः। इदानीमेव गत्वाहं स्थितिं रामाय ते ब्रुवे।। 50।।

rākṣasīnāṃ tarjanaistatsarvaṃ kathaya rāghave/
mayoktaṃ devi rāmo'pi tvaccintāparinisṭhitaḥ//
pariśocatyahorātraṃ tvadvārtāṃ nādhigamya saḥ/
idānīmeva gatvāhaṃ sthitiṃ rāmāya te bruve//

—By these demonesses, go and tell Raghav (Sri Ram) all of it as it is (i.e. exactly as you have seen or witnessed them yourself)'. I replied, 'Oh goddess! Sri Ram is also very worried and anxious about you (i.e. he constantly broods about you and your welfare) (49). Since he has no news (information) about you, he keeps on worrying day and night for you. I shall now go and tell him about your condition (50).

रामः श्रवणमात्रेण सुग्रीवेण सलक्ष्मणः। वानरानीकपैः सार्धमागमिष्यति तेऽन्तिकम्।। 51।।
रावणं सकुलं हत्वा नेष्यति त्वां स्वकं पुरम्। अभिज्ञां देहि मे देवि यथा मां विश्वसेद्विभुः।। 52।।

rāmaḥ śravaṇamātreṇa sugrīveṇa salakṣmaṇaḥ/
vānarānīkapaiḥ sārdhamāgamiṣyati te'ntikam//
rāvaṇaṃ sakulaṃ hatvā neṣyati tvāṃ svakaṃ puram/
abhijñāṃ dehi me devi yathā māṃ viśvasedvibhuḥ//

As soon as Sri Ram hears it, he will come to you (without wasting any time) along with Sugriv, Laxman and other monkey commanders (i.e. with a full army for the battle to rescue you from the clutches of the demons) (51). He would then slay Ravana along with his kith and kin, relatives and compatriots, and shall take you back to his capital city (Ayodhya). Oh goddess! You should give me some sign/token/mark/memento so that the Lord would believe me' (52).

इत्युक्ता सा शिरोरत्नं चूडापाशे स्थितं प्रियम्। दत्त्वा काकेन यद्वृत्तं चित्रकूटगिरौ पुरा।। 53।।
तदप्याहाश्रुपूर्णाक्षी कुशलं ब्रूहि राघवम्। लक्ष्मणं ब्रूहि मे किञ्चिदुरुक्तं भाषितं पुरा।। 54।।
तत्क्षमस्वाज्ञभावेन भाषितं कुलनन्दन। तारयेन्मां यथा रामस्तथा कुरु कृपान्वितः।। 55।।

ityuktā sā śiroratnaṃ cūḍāpāśe sthitaṃ priyam/
dattvā kākena yadvṛttaṃ citrakūṭagirau purā//

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tadapyāhāśrupūrṇākṣī kuśalaṃ brūhi rāghavam /
lakṣmaṇaṃ brūhi me kiñciddduruktaṃ bhāṣitaṃ purā //
tatkṣamasvājñabhāvena bhāṣitaṃ kulanandana /
tārayenmāṃ yathā rāmastathā kuru kṛpānvitaḥ //

When I had said so, she gave me the 'Choodamani' (an ornament worn by women on the head) which was stuck in her hairs (literally, the 'gem of the head') and was very dear to her. Then she told me the previous incident which happened at Chitrakoot mountain pertaining to the crow (i.e. Jayant's episode) (53), and filling her eyes with tears, she said, 'Tell Raghav (Sri Ram) about my welfare. Tell Laxman—'Oh the great son of the clan! Whatever harsh, accusing and scornful words that I might have used for you earlier due to my stupidity and ignorance, you must excuse and forgive me for it. Besides this, you must adopt whatever strategy that is necessary so that Sri Ram mercifully, gracefully and kindly liberates and delivers me from this horrible torment' (54-55).

इत्युक्त्वा रुदती सीता दुःखेन महतावृता। मयाप्याश्वासिता राम वदता सर्वमेव ते।। 56।।
ततः प्रस्थापितो राम त्वत्समीपमिहागतः। तदागमनवेलायामशोकवनिकां प्रियाम्।। 57।।

ityuktvā rudatī sītā duḥkhena mahatāvṛtā /
mayāpyāśvāsitā rāma vadatā sarvameva te //
tataḥ prasthāpito rāma tvatsamīpamihāgataḥ /
tadāgamanavelāyāmaśokavanikāṃ priyām //

Saying this, Sita became overwhelmed with great distress, sorrows and anguish, and she began to weep uncontrollably. I tried to reassure her by narrating all the details about you (i.e. about your welfare and your affection and love for her etc.) (56).

Then I took leave of her and came back to you. At the time of coming here, I demolished (or laid to waste) Ravana's Ashok grove which was very dear to him (57).

उत्पाट्य राक्षसांस्तत्र बहून्हत्वा क्षणादहम्। रावणस्य सुतं हत्वा रावणेनाभिभाष्य च।। 58।।
लङ्कामशेषतो दग्ध्वा पुनरप्यागमं क्षणात्। श्रुत्वा हनूमतो वाक्यं रामोऽत्यन्तप्रहृष्टधीः।। 59।।

utpāṭya rākṣasāṃstatra bahūnhatvā kṣaṇādaham /
rāvaṇasya sutaṃ hatvā rāvaṇenābhibhāṣya ca //
laṅkāmaśeṣato dagdhvā punarapyāgamaṃ kṣaṇāt /
śrutvā hanūmato vākyaṃ rāmo'tyantaprahṛṣṭadhīḥ //

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I killed many demons in a short time, and then I killed Ravana's son (Akshay Kumar) and had a talk with him (Ravana). Thereafter I burnt Lanka and came here quickly (as soon as I could, without wasting any time)'. Hearing these words of Hanuman, Sri Ram felt very happy and contented (59).

हनूमंस्ते कृतं कार्यं देवैरपि सुदुष्करम्। उपकारं न पश्यामि तव प्रत्युपकारिणः।। 60।।
इदानीं ते प्रयच्छामि सर्वस्वं मम मारुते। इत्यालिङ्ग्य समाकृष्य गाढं वानरपुङ्गवम्।।61।।

hanūmaṃste kṛtaṃ kāryaṃ devairapi suduṣkaram/
upakāraṃ na paśyāmi tava pratyupakāriṇaḥ//
idānīṃ te prayacchāmi sarvasvaṃ mama mārute/
ityāliṅgya samākṛṣya gāḍhaṃ vānarapuṅgavam//

He said, 'Oh Hanuman! The work which you have done is very difficult and daunting even for the Gods to do. I do not know what good I can do for you in return (60).

Oh Maruti! I will offer to you myself as a whole'. Saying this, Sri Ram pulled the most exalted of the monkeys (Hanuman) near him and firmly embraced him, i.e. clasped him affectionately to his bosom which is a rare privilege bestowed to only a few by the Lord (61).

सार्द्रनेत्रो रघुश्रेष्ठः परां प्रीतिमवाप सः। हनूमन्तमुवाचेदं राघवो भक्तवत्सलः।।62।।
परिरम्भो हि मे लोके दुर्लभः परमात्मनः। अतस्त्वं मम भक्तोऽसि प्रियोऽसि हरिपुङ्गव।।63।।

sārdranetro raghuśreṣṭhaḥ parāṃ prītimavāpa saḥ/
hanūmantamuvācedaṃ rāghavo bhaktavatsalaḥ//
parirambho hi me loke durlabhaḥ paramātmanaḥ/
atastvaṃ mama bhakto'si priyo'si haripuṅgava//

His (Sri Ram's) eyes welled up with tears (of joy, thanks giving and affection) and emotions of extreme affection began to heave in his heart for Hanuman. Then Raghav (Sri Ram), who is most graceful, merciful, kind, benevolent, benignant, endearing and munificent towards his devotees, said to Hanuman (62), 'Oh the best among monkeys! It is very rare for anyone to embrace me, the Parmatma, who am the supreme Lord in this world. You are immensely privileged and most lucky to have done it. Hence, since I have myself embraced you, you are most dear to me and an ardent devotee of mine' (63).

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यत्पादपद्मयुगलं तुलसीदलाद्यैः सम्पूज्य विष्णुपदवीमतुलां प्रयान्ति।
तेनैव किं पुनरसौ परिरब्धमूर्ती रामेण वायुतनयः कृतपुण्यपुञ्जः।।64।।

yatpādapadmayugalaṃ tulasīdalādyaiḥ
sampūjya viṣṇupadavīmatulāṃ prayānti /
tenaiva kiṃ punarasau parirabdhamūrtī
rāmeṇa vāyutanayaḥ kṛtapuṇyapuñjaḥ //

[Lord Shiva makes the following observation—] By worshipping his (Sri Ram's) two lotus-like divine, holy and august feet with Tulsi leaves (basil plant leaves) etc., one can attain the most exalted and matchless holy abode of Lord Vishnu. What can one say about the great privilege, great fortune, great honour and great luck of the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) who does auspicious, virtuous, righteous and noble deeds, and whose body was embraced by Sri Ram himself! (64).

***

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Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia born on 8th August, 1955 in Burdwan district of West Bengal, is a humble and unpretentious bachelor, who has dedicated his entire life to the service of Lord Ram. At present he is residing in the holy pilgrim city of Ayodhya (U.P. India) since 1985.

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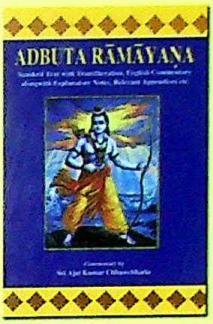

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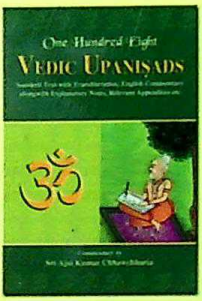

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